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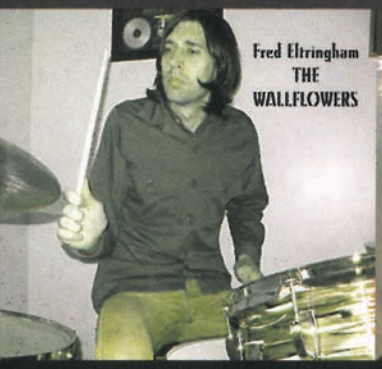

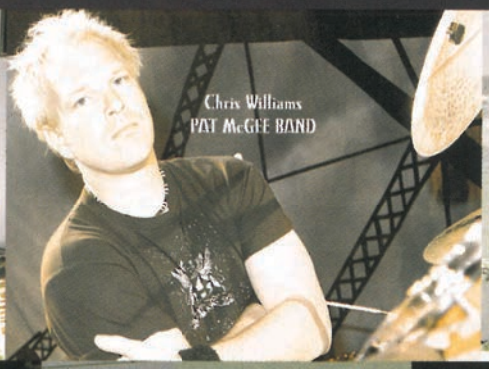

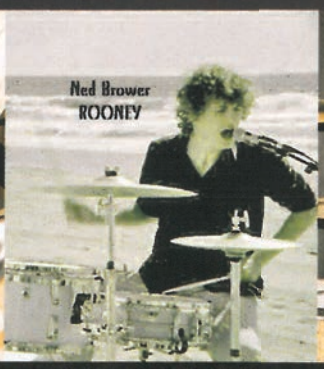

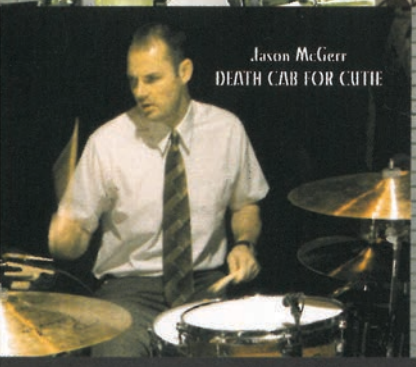

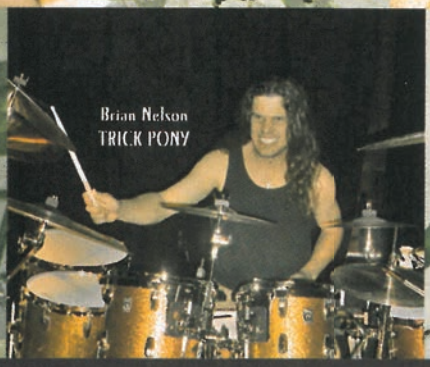

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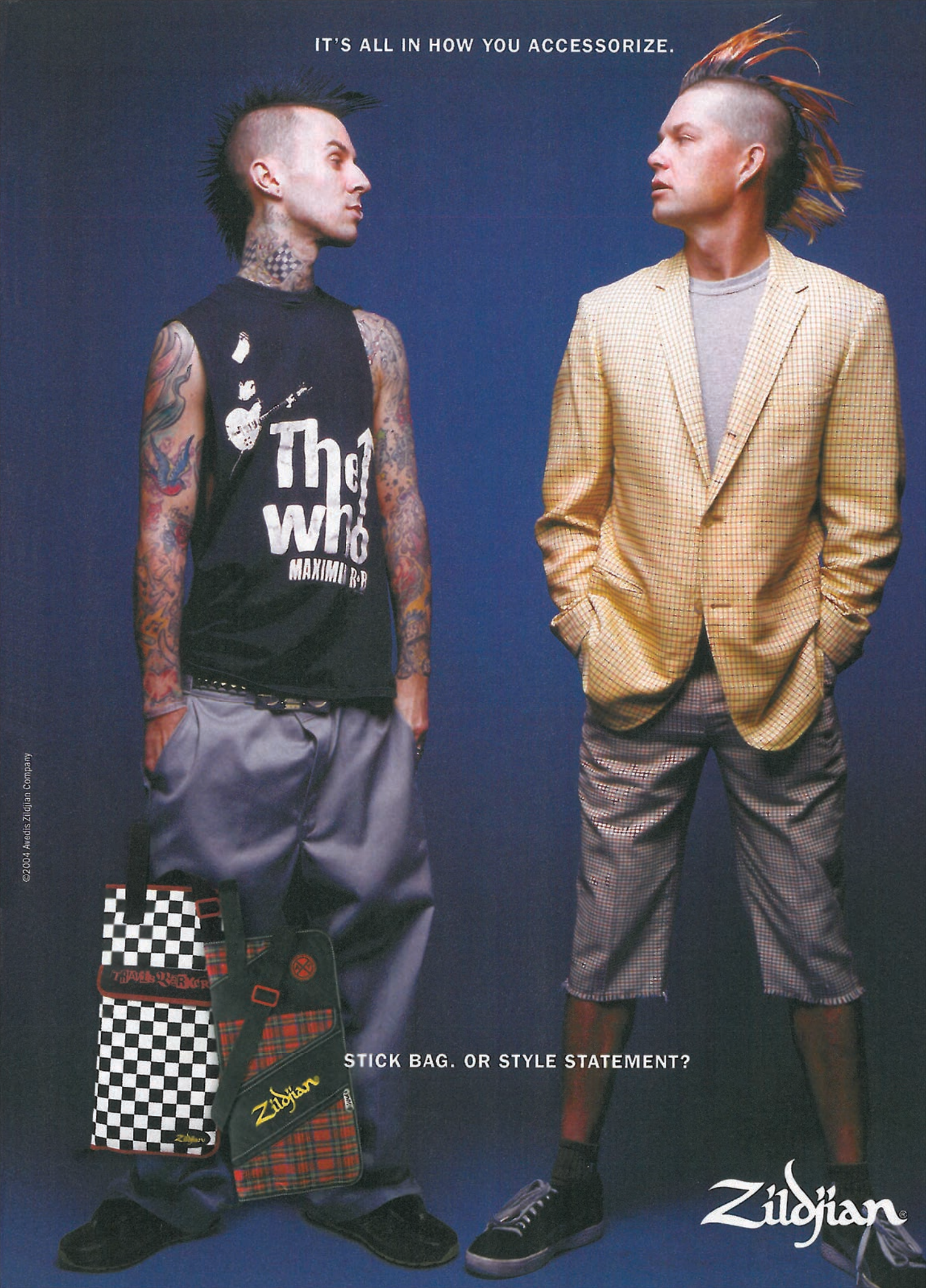
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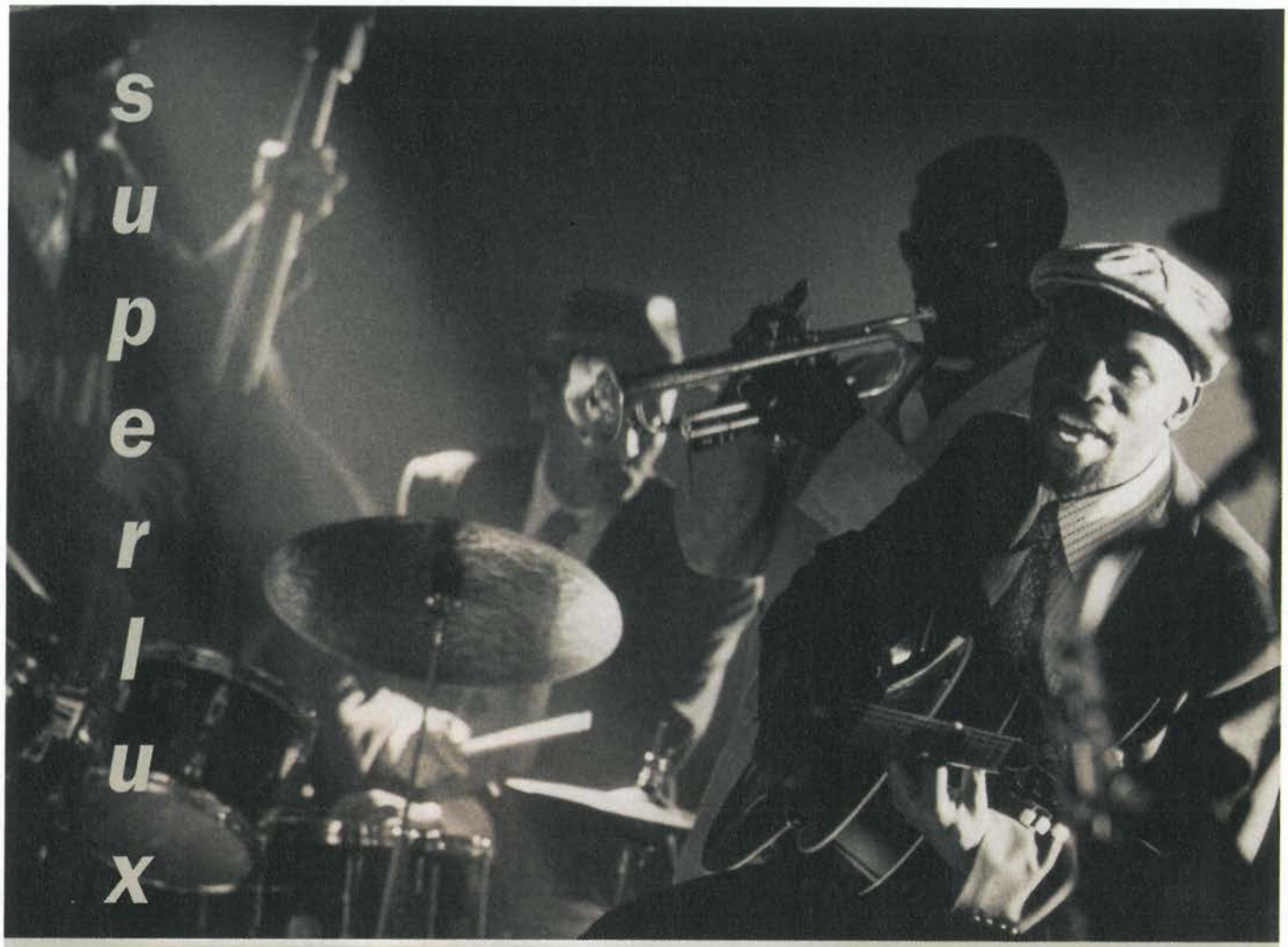

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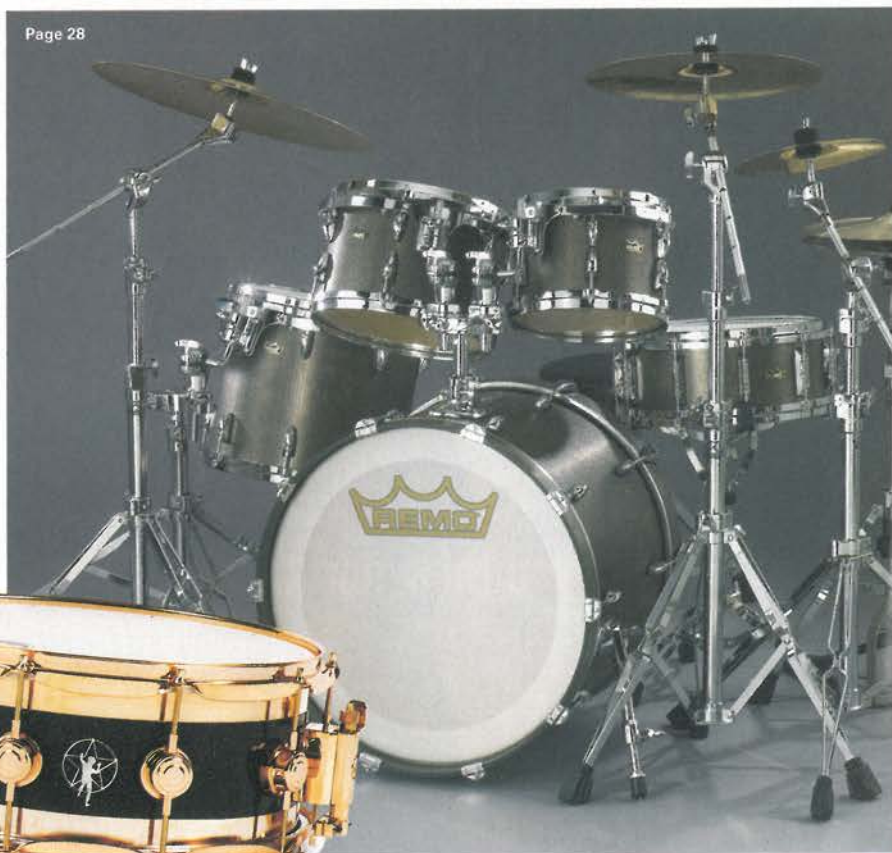

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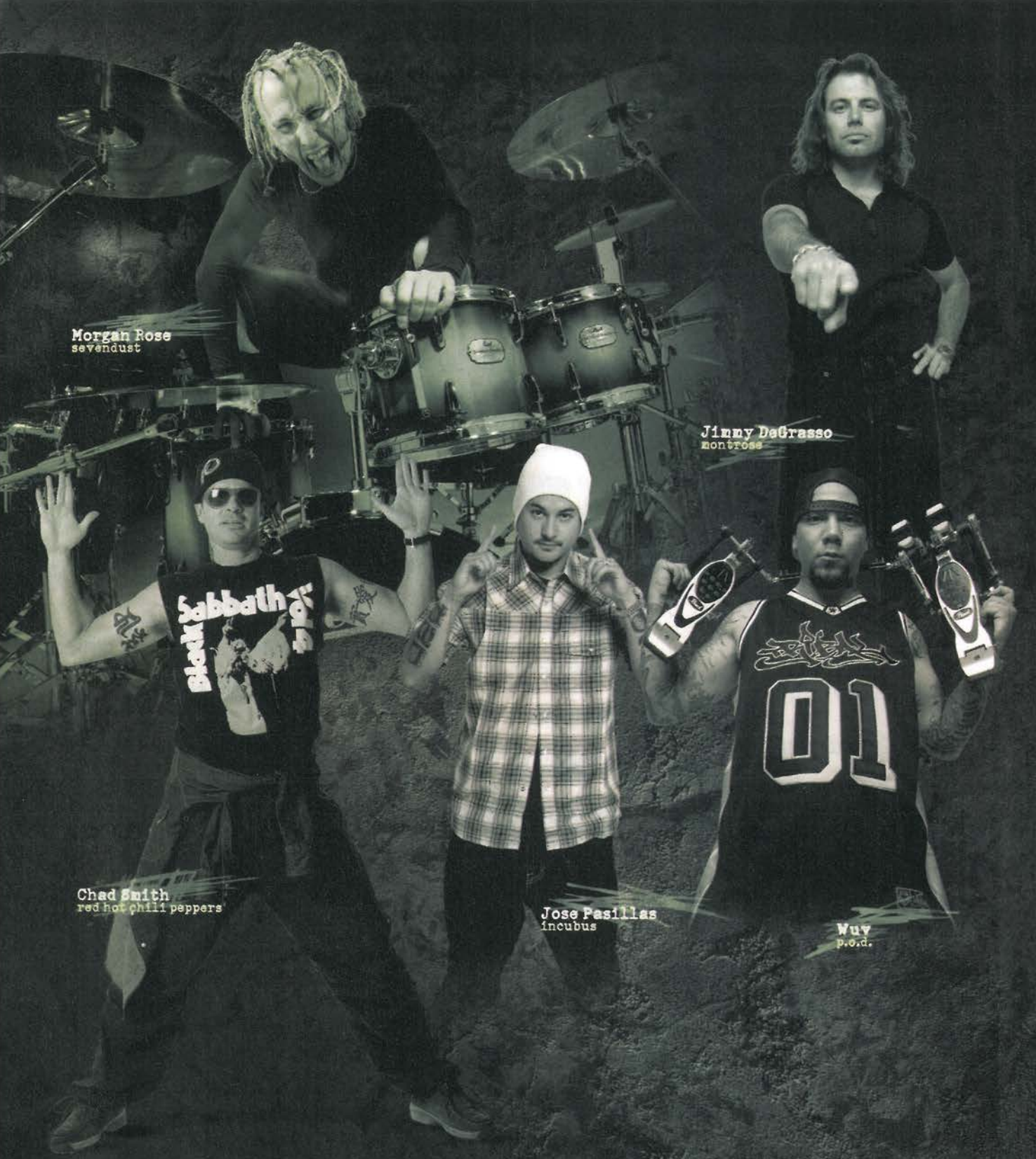

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The Joy Of Email

I can remember when the term "spam" referred only to a somewhat questionable canned-meat product. But in today's Internet age, we all know what it refers to: those aggravating, unwanted messages that crop up every time we open our email in-boxes.

I average around five hundred email messages per day in my *Modern Drummer* mailbox. Of those, easily 75% are spam messages of every description. Most have subject lines that make them easy to spot. But spammers have been getting more and more clever, creating subject lines that are just ambiguous enough to possibly be for "legit" messages. So I open them, and—*Doh!*—it's another ad for cheap Canadian drugs, or low-interest home refinancing, or anatomical improvements. And then there are the messages that contain viruses.... Yikes!

I don't have time enough in my day to deal with hassles like these, and neither does anyone else on the *MD* staff. In self-defense, we've taken to the wholesale deletion of *any* messages with suspicious-looking subject lines—including those that say "no subject."

The point of all this is to say that while we welcome legitimate messages from *MD* readers, we have to *know* that they are legitimate. If you have a message directed to one of our departments, please say so in the subject line, such as "Ask A Pro question," or "Inquiry for It's Questionable," or "Readers' Platform letter." If you have a subscription problem, let that be your subject line. Please *don't* use subject lines such as "Hi there!" or "Hello from Charlie," or "Check this guy out." And don't leave the subject line blank, so that we see "no subject" on the message. At this point, all messages with blank or questionable subject lines are likely to be deleted unread—and we wouldn't want to miss your message as a result.

Please help us to maintain an open and efficient line of communication with you. That way we can *all* benefit from the joy of email.

Rick Van Horn

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The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine
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THE AUGUST ISSUE

As a subscriber, I look forward to reading *MD* every month. But the August '04 issue seemed even better than usual. The profiles of Bill Stewart, Raymond Herrera, and all the other players were great, as was the interview with Kirk Miller giving the sound engineer's point of view.

I'm not facing any auditions in the near future, but I still enjoyed Andy James' *Taking Care Of Business* account of his first big-gig audition. Maureen Brown Gratton's *Concepts* piece about performing in the moment also hit the spot. And I always enjoy reading about Louie Bellson, so I was glad to read about his birthday bash at Drummers Collective. Finally, the continuing series on "Reading Basics" is an important feature that I just love.

It just seemed that there wasn't a dull page in this issue. Keep up the good work, and thanks! **Neal Teeman**

THE BEAT OF BROADWAY

Your August roundtable interview with six top Broadway drummers was fascinating. So much coverage is given to pop and rock drummers who record and tour, it's easy to forget that there are other areas of drumming in which exciting and lucrative careers can be made. I appreciated the candid and informative comments of all of the drummers interviewed. Based on their encouragement, I'm honing my reading skills, brushing up on a few musical styles, and packing my bags for New York City! **Allen Haldeman**

READING BASICS

All of your educational columns prove practical in application. But Kelly Paletta's "Reading Basics" series is particularly great. I've been playing for over twenty-five years, and I still learned some new things after reading the articles. Most important—and very savvy—was Kelly's "tying in" the examples of specific recordings for listening examples.

I want to encourage drummers who are just beginning to read not to let Kelly's vast but well-expressed knowledge overwhelm them. There is a lot of terminology to comprehend, but once you get past those terms it will become second-nature. **Mike McCraw**

I appreciate the care taken by Kelly Paletta to simplify the reading process for newbies like me, without talking down to us. I'm a forty-four-year-old beginner who just started subscribing to *MD*. Originally it seemed that while the rest of the world is comfortable behind their sets, all I'd relate to in the magazine was the photographs. But this series makes me feel welcomed into the world of drumming and drummers. **Susan Behrens**

WEEN'S CLAUDE COLEMAN

Finally—a story on the drummer for one of the few truly original and interesting bands performing today. Claude Coleman's positive attitude, love of drumming, and sheer dedication to his chosen calling (in the face of great adversity) are inspiring. And by the way, he *plays* great, too. Thanks for a terrific story. **Paul Dennato**

STEVE GOULDING PLAYBACK

Thanks to *MD* and Adam Budofsky for shining the spotlight on Steve Goulding, a truly underappreciated drummer, in your July issue. Not only does Steve play on some of my favorite recordings, his fearlessness in taking on new and diverse musical challenges is astounding.

Just under ten years ago, I was playing in Chicago with another English émigré, Cath Carroll. Steve would occasionally sit in on the kit. I would gladly get off the throne and play percussion so I could watch him work his magic. His time and taste were impeccable, his shuffles were fat and greasy, and, when he'd warm up with a little bit of "Watching The Detectives," I knew it wasn't just Elvis Costello that had made that song a hit. Steve's dry humor made him that much more fun to be around. He's a true musician and a gentleman. **Matthew Payne**

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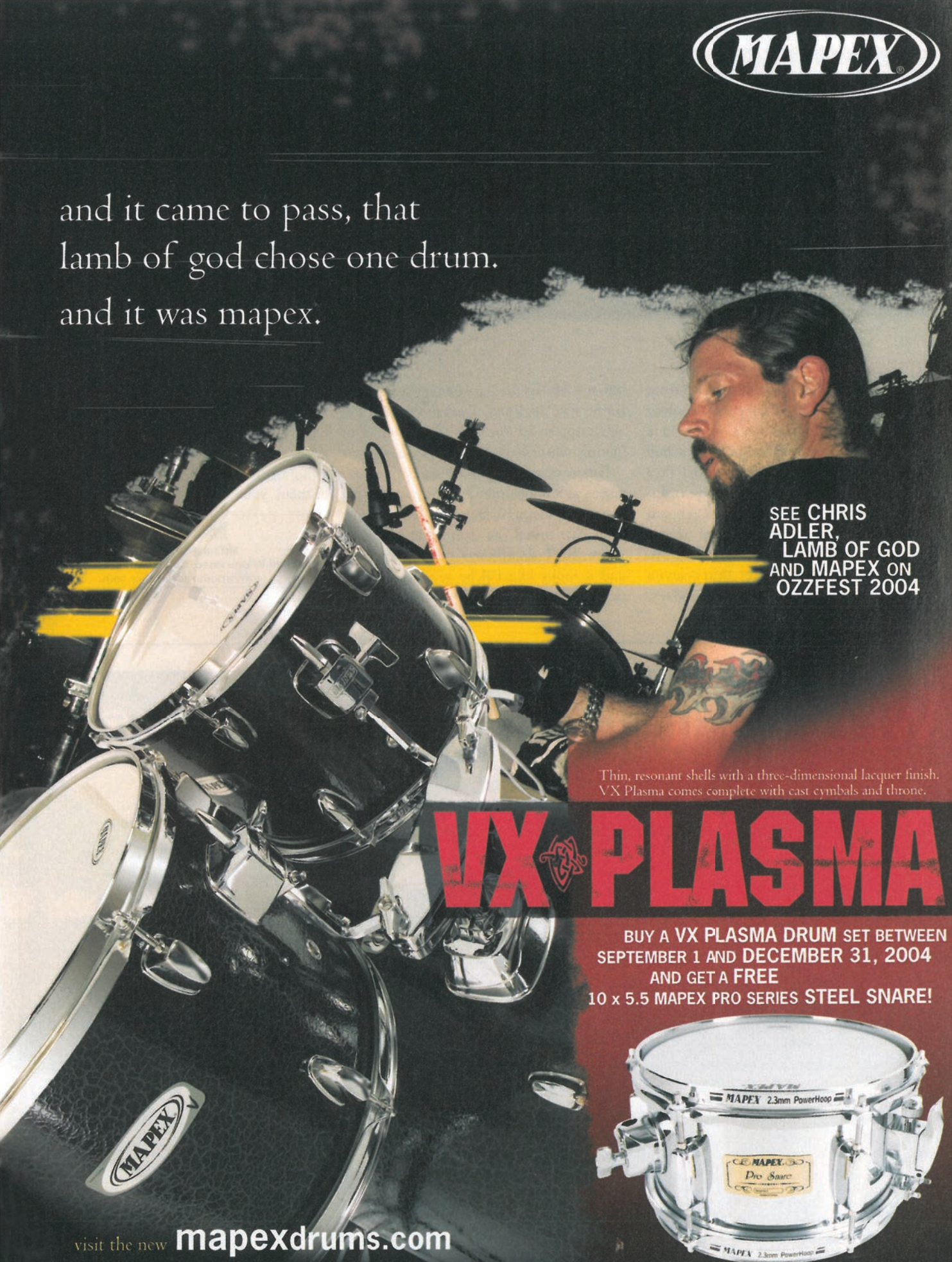

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Readers' Platform

Roy's Rebuttal

Editor's note: In the July It's Questionable *department, we suggested that a person could short-cut the process of "seating" a newly installed bass drum head by sitting on the head (while on the drum) to stretch out the plastic film. Aquarian's Roy Burns took issue with that suggestion, as follows.*

At Aquarian we do not feel that it is a good idea to sit with your weight on the bass drum head. It is possible to damage the head and perhaps the drum itself. We recommend that you tighten the head to the tension and pitch that you want. Let the drum sit overnight, and then fine-tune it the next day if you feel you must.

Joe Porcaro has put heads on his drums on the day of a recording session and experienced no problems. Jack DeJohnette has had the same experience with our heads. Forcefully stretching the head achieves no positive results that we have been able to observe. Just tighten the head to the desired tension and start playing. At least that is what we recommend for Aquarian heads.

Roy Burns
vice president of marketing
Aquarian Accessories

Retirement? What's That?

A while back I had planned to retire from gigging. At the age of fifty-two, hauling gear at 3:00 A.M. after a night in a smoke-filled club wasn't the thrill it had once been. Besides, while I still laid down drum tracks in my demo studio (and continued to work on my keyboard and guitar chops), I had resigned myself to the fact that my drum chops were starting to drop off. After thirty-seven years of gigs I could play solid grooves, but my ability to "go out on a musical limb" had declined. I even dropped my subscription to *Modern Drummer*, after having subscribed for many years.

But recently I picked up some *MD* issues at a bookstore. As always, *Modern Drummer* inspired me and reminded me why I've loved the drums for all these years. So I accepted a couple of calls, and it looks like I'll be gigging once or twice a week again. I'll also be renewing my *MD* subscription.

You've been a source of inspiration many times over the last few decades. And now you've had a big part in dragging my butt out of "retirement." For that I thank you.

Mike Helgesen

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Ludwig Bass Drum Hoops

I recently purchased a brand-new Ludwig kit with their Black Oyster Pearl finish. When I bought the kit, I begged for the bass drum to have matching inlaid hoops, which I think make a set look beautiful. Apparently this was not an option in my finish, even though inlaid hoops are available in the Psychedelic Red Big Beat and the Mod Orange outfits. Why is this?
Ludwig Lover

Ludwig Black Oyster Pearl kits, like this Fab Four outfit, feature black bass drum hoops.

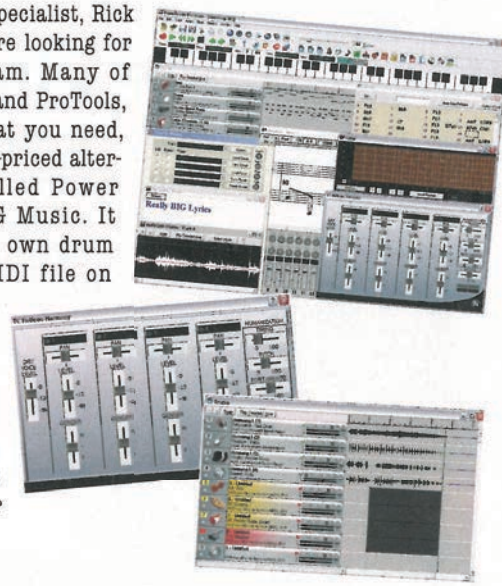
Ludwig director of marketing Jim Catalano replies, "Thanks for purchasing a Ludwig kit. Your Classic Maple drums in Black Oyster Pearl did not have inlaid bass drum hoops for a reason. Let me explain the situation.

"For many years, wrapped finishes used by Ludwig and many other companies were made from acetate materials manufactured in Italy and then sent to a laminator in the USA. These materials looked great, but they had a tendency to shrink slightly over time. This shrinking may not be noticed on a full-size drumshell—especially since the top of the shell is covered where the drumhead is seated. But when it comes to an inlaid bass drum hoop, the material has full exposure. The small size of the inlaid strip lying in a routed-out channel of the hoop would accentuate that slight shrinking of the material.

"A few years ago, we changed all of our wrapped finishes. White Marine Pearl, Black Diamond, and all of our sparkles are now made from non-shrinking PVC materials, yet they retain the great appearance of the earlier acetate materials. The one exception is Black Oyster Pearl. That finish continues to be made from acetate. We'd like to convert it from acetate to PVC, but that's up to the material manufacturer and laminator. This is why on any Classic Maple bass drum wrapped in Black Oyster Pearl, we only offer the hoop in a solid Sable High-Gloss Black finish, with no inlay. We agree that inlaid hoops would give the bass drum a more appealing 'vintage' look. But because we want to offer our customers a product of quality in function as well as appearance, we have opted not to install inlaid hoops with Black Oyster Pearl. We hope this material situation will change in the future."

Drumbeats On Computer

I'm looking for some software that I can create beats on, like a drum machine. I'd like to be able to copy an exercise out of your magazine and hear what it sounds like, or copy my own beats to a .wav file and send them to my guitar player to write music with. Is there an inexpensive way to do this?
Merrill Hale



Our computer-percussion specialist, Rick Long, replies, "What you are looking for is a MIDI editing program. Many of them, including Cakewalk and ProTools, have features beyond what you need, and are expensive. A value-priced alternative is a program called Power Tracks Pro Audio, by PG Music. It allows you to write your own drum parts, play them as a MIDI file on your computer using your sound card, and save the MIDI file to a disk for sharing with your friends. The program is easy to understand and costs a mere $29. Visit www.pgmusic.com for more information."

Stop-Drilling A Cracked Cymbal

To my horror, I've discovered a small crack in my 8" UFIP Class series cymbal. The crack is only about $^3/_8$" long and is very hard to detect. I want to try to save the cymbal by drilling a hole at each end of the crack. What is the correct drill bit size to use for the job? This is my favorite among all my cymbals. Please help me save its life.
Tom Fulmer

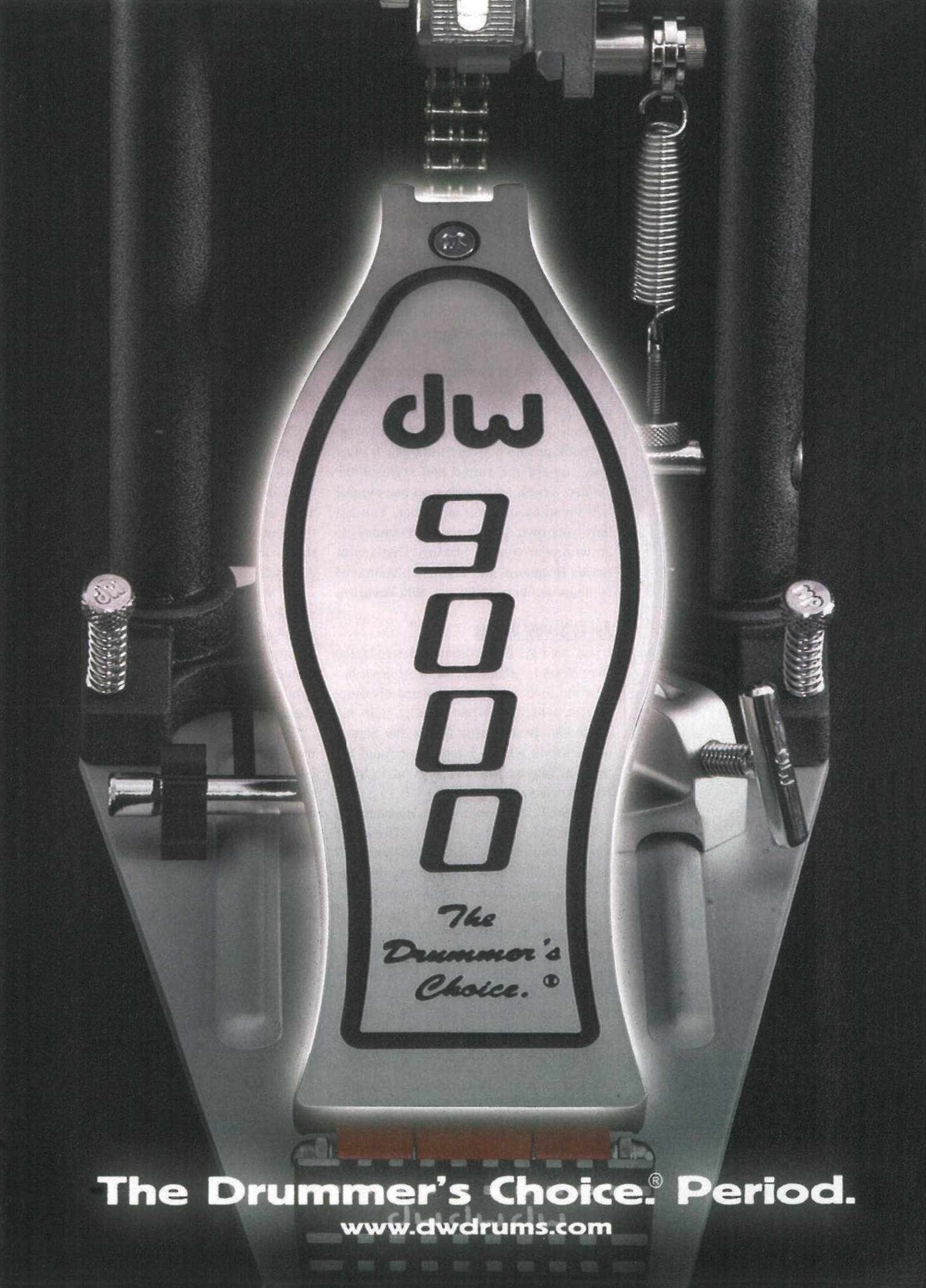
Finding a crack in a favorite cymbal can be as painful as suffering an injury yourself. So we sympathize with your feelings.

The technique of stop-drilling a crack can be effective, *if* you can locate the real ends of the crack. The problem is that cracks can extend microscopically beyond the point at which they're visible. For that reason, it's usually best to use a drill bit a little *larger than you might originally* figure in order to create the holes at the ends of the crack. (Even then there are no guarantees.)

That being said, however, you can't afford to go *too* large with the drill bit when you're dealing with a very small, thin cymbal such as your UFIP splash. So, our suggestions would be as follows:

1. Using a magnifying lens, do your best to locate the absolute ends of the crack.
2. Mark those end points with a black dot from a Sharpie or similar marker. The dot should be about $^1/_{16}$" to $^1/_8$" in diameter.
3. Normally, in order to start drilling a hole in metal, you'd use a hammer and a pointed punch to create a "start dent" in the metal surface. But in this case that could cause damage of its own to the cymbal. So instead, we suggest starting with a very small drill bit ($^1/_{16}$"), and then using a larger bit ($^3/_{16}$") to create the finished holes.
4. When actually drilling the holes, it's important to place a small block of wood beneath the cymbal, in such a way that the point at which you're drilling is lying flat on the block. This will give the drill bit something to go into, and will prevent "flattening" of the cymbal's bow under the pressure of the drilling operation.

Finally, if at all possible, this operation should be conducted on a drill press, rather than with a hand-held power drill. A drill press provides more gradual, controllable pressure, as well as an absolutely vertical approach to the surface of the cymbal.



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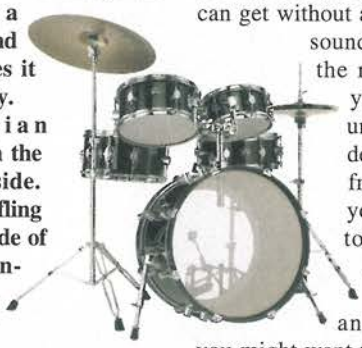
A Big Little Bass Drum Sound

I have the compact Pacific Chameleon kit. Everything on the kit works fine except the 12x20 kick drum. It has a very small, poppy sound, and poor projection that makes it almost inaudible during play.

I'm using Aquarian Superkick II heads on both the batter and the resonant side. These heads come with muffling foam rings glued to the inside of them. I have also tried unmuffled heads. And I've tried different tuning applications on each side.

I'm tying to achieve the biggest sound I can get from this bass drum without a lot of resonance—something more on the order of low-end punch. I can't afford a new set, so I hope you can suggest something that I haven't tried.

IDB Chops



A 12x20 bass drum is only going to sound so loud and so deep, no matter what head combination or tuning you try. It's a matter of acoustical physics.

One difficulty that you face is a somewhat contradictory desire: "the biggest sound I can get without a lot of resonance." The big sound of a bass drum is largely the result *of* its resonance—if you're talking about an unmiked drum. If you want a deep, punchy, muffled sound from such a small bass drum, you're almost certainly going to have to mike it and add appropriate EQ. If you want maximum volume and depth *without* miking, you might want to drop the idea of the muffled, punchy sound.

The Superkick II is an excellent batter head, but it's not designed for use as a front head. For that purpose, you might try Aquarian's Regulator front heads. They offer a variety of muffling options, along with a choice of whether or not to have a hole. In your case, we'd suggest no hole and the minimum amount of muffling, in order to let the front head resonate more freely and project what "bigness" the small bass drum *can* produce.

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?
Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

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Sheryl Crow's Shawn Pelton And Electronics Specialist Tony Verderosa On Playing With Loops

Q I've recently joined a group that will be using loops and samples on stage during our live performances. My plan is to control the loops/samples from a laptop placed to the left of my drumset. I have the Sonic Foundry Sound Forge 6.0. Would Windows XP be good to use live? Can I trigger different loops with a single drumpad (like the Pintech DB 12 Dingbat), or would that be a waste when I could just click-and-go with a mouse on the laptop? What's the best way to start a loop at any given point in a song? **Joel D. Seawell**

Shawn Pelton responds:

A Great question! Drummers are dealing with loops live on stage more than ever before. One program I highly recommend is Ableton Live. It's specifically designed for performing with loops. A Windows or Mac laptop would be fine.

You mentioned using a single pad controller like the Pintech DB 12. This brings up a couple of issues to be aware of. First, a trigger pad needs to convert the physical hit into MIDI information. Some pads have this process built in. The drumKAT and Roland SPD-6 are examples of pad setups with MIDI outs built in.

Alex Solca

The triggered MIDI note must then get to the laptop. A simple USB interface, like the m-audio MIDIsport 1x1, would be a compact way of getting MIDI in and out of the laptop. Using the Pintech DB 12 would require feeding a standard ¼" cable into a module that would convert the trigger hit into MIDI information. The Pintech Web site lists recommended modules like the Roland TD-6 or Alesis DM5.

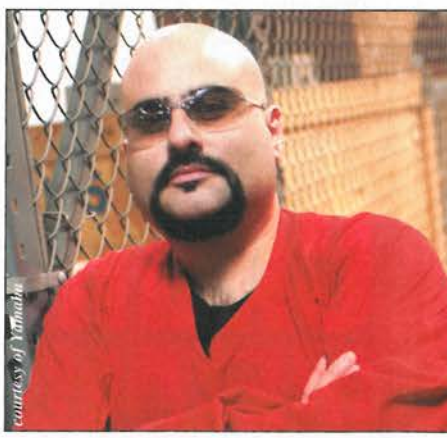
Starting a loop at the beginning of a song could definitely be done with a mouse, allowing you to "click and go," as you put it. Ableton Live allows you to map out your arrangement from start to finish. It's also possible to perform in a more jamming kind of way by triggering the different loops on the fly. This is where the pads would come in. On the Sheryl Crow tour we used a drumKAT to start and stop loops in an EMU rack-mounted sampler.

The last thing to consider is how to monitor the loops clearly enough to keep your playing locked with them. Will you need headphones? In-ear monitors? And what about a count-off? Will you need a click track if there are sections in the song when the loop drops out? The simplest solution (without having to invest in a multiple-output soundcard) is to pan a count-off and/or click track hard left into a headphone amp, and pan all the loops hard right to the sound engineer. The sky can be the limit when mixing loops with live drumming.

Tony Verderosa responds:

A Using a laptop for triggering loops live on stage is cool, but it's certainly an adventurous and stressful way to go. Let's look at an easier and simpler solution first.

To begin with, you must have a drum module and a couple of drumpads. I'm a Yamaha endorser, and I've had success using Yamaha's new DTXtreme IIS sampling drum module to do exactly what you're describing. The module has 94 seconds of sampling time built right in, which should eliminate the need to use a laptop on stage. For many people this can be a huge plus. Any number of issues can arise when using a laptop live. Hard drives can go down, software can glitch in the middle of a song...not to mention the lag time you'll feel between hitting the drumpad and hearing the sample.


courtesy of Yamaha

I'm extremely picky about the feel of triggering samples live in real time. I want them to respond immediately. When you're dealing with a laptop, a sound card, and virtual samplers, you will experience some noticeable latency no matter how much you adjust your settings. I'm sure that in two to three years this will no longer be an issue, since computer speed is increasing at an impressive rate. But it *is* an issue today.

The DTXtreme module was designed to record and trigger samples with an incredibly fast response time. It also has an extensive onboard library of cool loops, effects, and drum sounds. Using that module with one or two pads mounted to your left would give you a roadworthy setup. Yamaha's latest pads feature three separate zones and a data control knob that lets you tune, filter, and modify each sound right from the pad. The DTX was also designed to start and stop loops live from each pad.

You can still use your laptop or desktop computer to prepare, arrange, and modify your samples and loops. Using a

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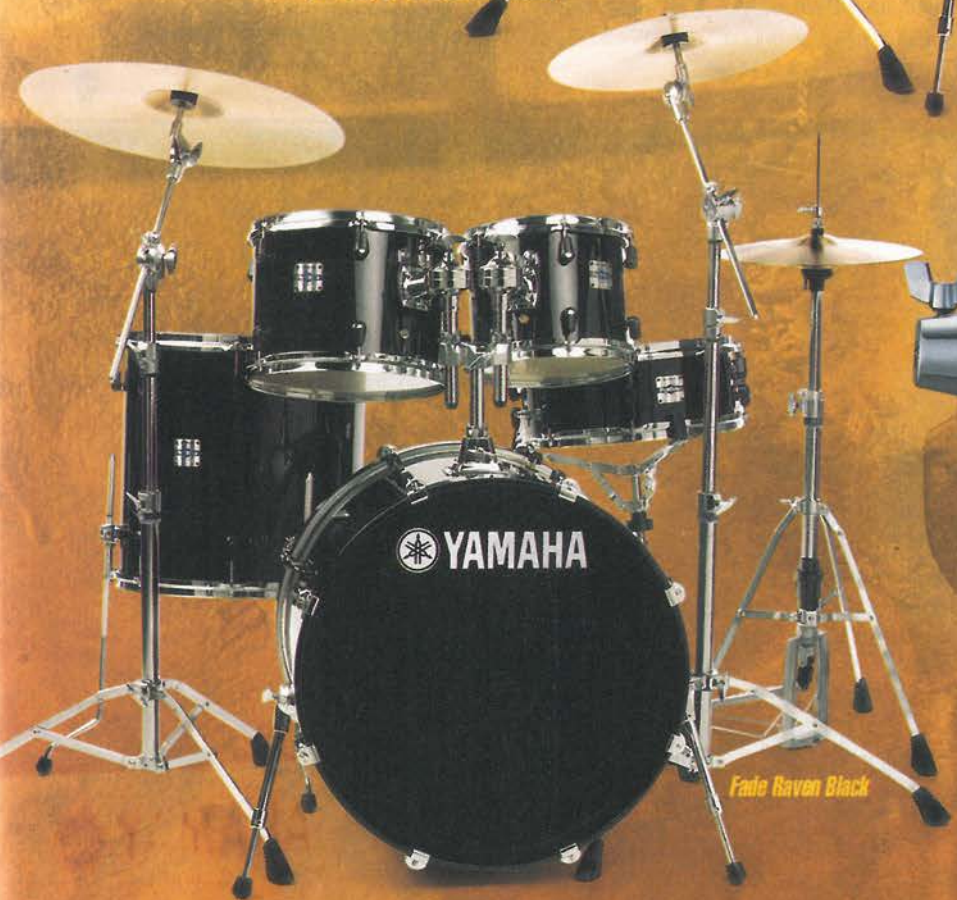

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USB Smartmedia Card device, you simply drag those files to a folder on a properly formatted Smartmedia Card. When you arrive at the gig, you turn the DTX on with the card in place. The module automatically loads all of your samples and loops. This is the easiest and most cost-effective way to go.

If you still wish to use your laptop on stage, Windows XP is fine. But you'll need to invest in a virtual sampler like Steinberg's Halion or Ableton Live to properly map out and trigger your samples (using MIDI notes from your drum module). This method is strictly for hardcore computer-literate drummers. You will still need a MIDI drum module to translate each triggered drum or pad hit to a MIDI signal to be sent to the laptop. You'll be dealing with sound cards/audio breakout boxes and MIDI interfaces as part of this system, in addition to the MIDI drum module. You will also notice some latency and lag time each time you trigger a sample, which may or may not be a problem for you.

You can do some wonderful sound-design effects in Ableton Live. You can also create some astounding loops, which can start and stop from a MIDI note assigned to each drumpad. This method is very cool, but I always try to minimize the margin of error when playing live. Keep it simple. And remember: There's no reason why you can't create a cool loop in Halion, Nuendo, or Ableton Live, save it as a .wav file, and import that file into a DTX module. It's all a matter of your technological comfort level and your budget.

I've written some books dealing with all of these issues. *The Techno Primer* (Hal Leonard Publications) is an introduction to the history, artists, technology, and styles associated with loop-based music. *The Drummer's Guide To Loop-Based Music* covers my DJ/drumming concept, triggering loops/samples live, styles like drum 'n' bass and breakbeats, lots of transcriptions, and interviews with artists such as Zach Danziger, Jojo Mayer, and Futureman. For more information, please visit my Web site, www.tonyverderosa.com.

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"Drums are meant to be loud. It's like telling a piccolo player, 'Don't play high,' or telling a trumpet player, 'Don't be so brassy,' or telling a bass player, 'Don't play low.' Volume, physicality, and aggressiveness are part of what drumming is about."

Jazz legend **Tony Williams**, July 1992

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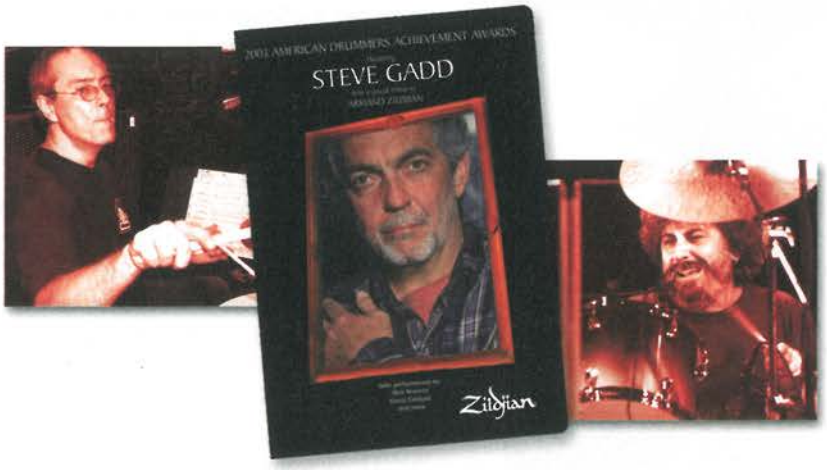

In recognition of Steve Gadd's incredible impact on the art of drumming and music, on September 13, 2003, the Avedis Zildjian company presented Steve with an American Drummers Achievement Award (ADAA) at the Berklee Performance Center in Boston, MA— an historic evening that also included a special tribute to the late **Armand Zildjian**.

This once-in-a-lifetime event was hosted by **Mr. Bill Cosby** and featured an all-star band that included **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Rick Marotta** on drums, **Michael Landau, Jimmy Johnson, Larry Goldings** and special guest appearances by **Will Lee** and **Tom Scott**. The evening culminated in an incredible performance by Steve with **James Taylor**.

The double-disc DVD features over six hours of footage, including the evening's great performances, exclusive rehearsal footage; a 20-minute documentary on Steve's career, backstage interviews, rare, early film footage of Steve and more.

Special DVD features include: Rehearsal Footage • Interviews with Eric Clapton, Chick Corea, Vinnie Colaiuta, Rick Marotta, Will Lee and Tom Scott • 5.1 Surround Sound mixes of all of the performances mixed from the drum chair • 35-minute interview with Steve • Rare video footage of Steve, circa 1970 with the U.S. Army Band, and footage from 1977 of the band, L'image, featuring Steve and Mike Mainieri • Photo Gallery

Total Running Time: Six Hours and Ten Minutes

Presented in association with Zildjian

Zildjian's net proceeds from the sale of this DVD will go to the Armand Zildjian Percussion Scholarship at the Berklee College of Music.

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LOCAL H'S
Brian St. Clair
Holding A Solid Pair

It's easy for a rock 'n' roll drummer to hide behind three or four bandmates on stage and just keep the beat, getting through the set virtually unnoticed. But when there's one guitarist playing several amps set at stun volume, and the drumkit's positioned at the front edge of the stage, there's only one thing a drummer like Local H's Brian St. Clair can do—rise to the challenge.

Pounding with the sheer brutality of slammers like Dave Grohl, LA punk legend Chuck Biscuits, and The Melvins' Dale Crover, St. Clair can often be spotted with a left arm that's flung behind his head mere moments before coming down with a punishing snare drum impact. It surely makes for a raging visual experience.

Still, St. Clair isn't all brawn and no brain, as Local H's latest album, *Whatever Happened To P.J. Soles?*, will attest. Besides his feverish drumming, *P.J. Soles* also showcases the dynamic and dexterous side of St. Clair, including the title track, in which he accompanies guitarist/vocalist Scott Lucas with sensitive passages during the song's verses. *P.J. Soles* also finds St. Clair experimenting sonically. "This album was all about trying out new sounds," he agrees. "There's stuff like 'Money On The Dresser,' where I overdubbed five or six different snares. Every measure or bar has a different snare coming in. I'd never tried anything like that before."

Such experimentation was furthered by the use of an ordinary tape recorder to attain a specific ambience from his kit. "Scott had an idea to take a boom box and rig it up so it had a microphone hooked to it," St. Clair recalls. "Then we'd mike the boom box in a separate room. There are certain songs where it worked really well for distorted sounds."

When St. Clair isn't busy in the studio, he's almost literally busting his back while on the road with Local H. "My lower back gets such a workout on stage," he says. "Sometimes I feel a lot of pain. But all I have to remember to do is stretch before the gig. If I forget to do it, then I have to lay back a bit until I warm up. But fortunately for me, my laying back is still a lot harder than most people play!"

Waleed Rashidi

Josh Todd's
Kent Ross It Was Meant To Be

When an unknown LA-by-way-of-Salt Lake City band placed a "Lead Singer Wanted" ad in a local music paper, no one expected to attract the interest of a guy who'd previously fronted a platinum-selling, internationally known band. But that's exactly what happened when vocalist Josh Todd, of the now defunct blues-rock tour de force Buckcherry, showed up to audition for a group of musicians who'd been practically living out of their cars.

"Josh didn't mention his last name," remembers drummer Kent Ross. "None of us recognized him from Buckcherry, because he came in with a shaved head and a skateboard and looked kind of punk rock. But once he started singing, one of our guitarists was like, 'Wait a minute. Were you in a previous band?'"

Ross says there was never any doubt after the audition that Todd was the guy they were looking for. Josh Todd, the *band*—which also includes bassist Mark John and guitarists Mike Hewitt and Jesse Logan—released its debut album, *You Made Me,* in March of this year.

Robb Cohen

Describing his own style as "aggressive and simple," Kent cites Dave Grohl, Taylor Hawkins, and Matt Sorum as some of his favorite players. "I'm all about really hard, solid playing," he offers. "Live, I'm just trying to rock. Dave Grohl is considered a great drummer because he's tasty and really solid. I want people to remember me as a drummer who plays great with a 'less is more' approach."

In addition to touring the States almost nonstop since the album's release, the band went to Japan during the summer for two festival shows at Yokahama Stadium and the Osaka Dome, which featured headliners Aerosmith and The Who. Ross admits he still sometimes can't believe the band's good fortune since hooking up with Todd. "I didn't even know we'd be touring this fast," he laughs. "I thought we'd be trying to get a show on a Wednesday night at some dive. But I really believe that it all was meant to happen."

Gail Worley

Audio Karate's
Gabriel Camacho The Stevenson Factor

When LA's Audio Karate chose punk drumming legend Bill Stevenson to produce their new album, *Lady Melody,* it was "pretty much a dream come true" for drummer Gabriel Camacho. "The first punk band I listened to was The Descendents," says Camacho. "Bill's style was so different from anything I'd heard. He was the first drummer I ever heard play a fill through four counts or even a whole verse. I thought that was *amazing.*

Dave Moore

"I always loved the drum sounds on Descendents records," Gabe continues. "So when Bill asked me what kind of drum sound I wanted to go for, I told him about things he'd played that have influenced me. For example, I really liked the attack of the drums on *Pummel.* But for my snare sound, I wanted to use something like he got on *Everything Sucks.* Since he did all of those albums, he was able to show me what I wanted to learn. It was fun to go back to albums that have contained the anthems of my life, and to be able to establish my drum sound from the man who actually played on those records."

Something Gabe also enjoys is improvising and changing things up live. "In the studio, I make sure things are tight and nothing's there that doesn't belong," the drummer says. "But live, I'm all over the place. Every fill could be different each night, because it's all about what I want to do at that moment."

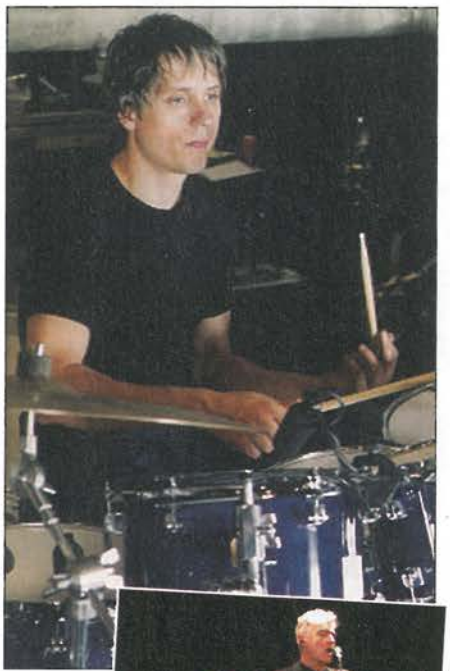
Gabe says that the shared chemistry among his bandmates is what makes this method work. "We've been playing together for so long—and been best friends outside the band—that we *feel* each other. If I go off on a rampage, they know just where I'm going, and they're right there to meet me. If I'm about to end a fill but I want to take it a little longer, they fall in and make it look like I played perfectly. My friends like to give me a hard time and say that I play 'lead drums,'" he laughs. "But I'm cool with that."

Gail Worley

David Byrne's

Graham Hawthorne

Blending The Third World With The New



In the past fifteen years or so, a New York City music fan out for a night of high-quality rock, pop, jazz, world music, singer/songwriter folk, or alt-country might well have been moved by the superbly musical and confident drumming of Graham Hawthorne. During this time he was also establishing himself as a player of national importance, recording and touring with artists such as Aretha Franklin, Harry Belafonte, and Joan Osborne.

More recently, Hawthorne received even wider exposure on a lengthy tour with Paul Simon. Now he's out with world music maven David Byrne. Hawthorne's mastery of Brazilian and West African rhythms, as well as his crisp approach to American pop music, makes him a natural for performers as adventurous as these.

"When I heard Salif Keita's album *Soro*, it blew my mind," Hawthorne recalls. "I started to try to bring those rhythms into pop situations. I deliberately wanted to do a crossover of African pop music and American pop music." He pursued these interests by playing with a wide variety of musicians from many cultures, as well as traveling to Africa to study Senegal's rich tradition of drumming and dance.

When Paul Simon was looking for someone to replace Steve Gadd for his 2001 tour, Hawthorne's name came up. "I knew a bunch of guys in the band," Hawthorne says, "having played various ethnic music gigs around town. For the audition I had to learn five songs; we played through them and everything was cool. During the break, Vincent Nguini, the guitar player, started playing this intense Cameroonian groove, and I jumped in and started playing it with him. When Paul walked back in the room, Vincent was standing up, with his head back and a big smile on his face, grooving. I think it made a big impression on Paul."

Hawthorne's funky, authoritative, yet ultimately supportive drumming can be heard on David Byrne's current *My Backwards Life* tour. In addition, Hawthorne's passion for world music has led him naturally to assume the role of producer and composer. Information about his own CD, *Mbalafunk,* can be found at www.mbalafunk.com.

Jon Albrink

Eddie Bayers

Studio Star Joins *Two* Bands

Eddie Bayers is blown away by the fact that, after thirty years of first-call recording status, he's recently become a member of not just one, but *two* bands. And in fact, both bands will have significant releases in the coming months.

Three years ago, Bayers formed a band with some of his best friends and fellow studio pals—John Hobb, Brent Mason, Paul Franklin, and Michael Rhodes. They called the group The Players. The group has a new live DVD and features their own performances along with guest appearances by Peter Frampton, Shawn Colvin, Travis Tritt, Vince Gill, and Jim Horn.

"That's not all," Bayers says enthusiastically. "I've also become part of the notorious Cherry Bombs, which is a project that is close to the hearts of many music fans, because I inherited it from our beautiful friend, the late Larrie Londin. I played keyboards with Larrie when I first came to Nashville in 1973. He and I played together at the Carousel Club in Printer's Alley. We became very close, and he inspired me to switch to drums. Larrie was the drummer with The Cherry Bombs.

"To make a long story longer," Eddie laughs, "Rodney Crowell was recently given a lifetime achievement award from ASCAP, and he put us together to perform at the event. Tony Brown, who was the keyboard player for The Cherry Bombs, is now president of the Universal South record label, and he decided to sign the band for an album, which we have since finished. And we're all sharing in everything, so it truly is a band." The rest of the lineup includes Vince Gill, Rodney Crowell, Hank DeVito, Richard Bennett, and Michael Rhodes.

Bayers continues to be busy in the Nashville session scene, appearing on new recordings by Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Elton John, Catherine Britt, George Strait, George Jones, Craig Morgan, Vince Gill, Rodney Crowell, and Uncle Kracker. "All of this is so amazing to me," the drummer says. "It just goes to show you, one never knows...."

Robyn Flans

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snare rimshots can sound boxy at high volumes

tom mount requires extra tightening to eliminate slippage

by T. Bruce Wittet

Reviewing Remo's new Gold Crown drumset with Advanced Acousticon shells was a sort of homecoming for me. Back in 1984, I was the house drummer at a recording studio that acquired an early Acousticon kit. I remember smiling at the notion of drumshells made from a continuous wrap of resins and fibers, as opposed to traditional wood shells. Considerable merriment ensued when an engineer uttered the words "toilet paper rolls."

But the sound of the bass drum and toms wiped the grins from our faces. It so dwarfed the sound of my preferred drums that the producers increasingly insisted that I use the Remos. Accordingly, those drums made it onto at least fifty commercial jingles. We used them (as did visiting rock bands) until the lugs literally dropped off the shells.

Which brings us to the subject of hardware. The hardware on Remo kits of the past has never been much to shout about. Would the hardware on the new Gold Crown kit fare any better than its predecessors? I wondered about this, and about the new Advanced

The Gold Crown Euro model features a 22" bass drum and a suspended 14" floor tom.

Acousticon, which is a harder material than the original formula and allows for sharp 45° bearing edges without any furring. Would it hold up sonically to my fond recollections?

Well, I'm happy to report that this is a fine-sounding drumset. Remo is pitching the Gold Crown to the jazz/fusion market—as evidenced by the available sizes and configurations—and it ought to gain acceptance there. As for the hardware, it has improved.

Cloaked Royally

Our review kit is designated as the Fusion model. It consisted of pretty standard-sized toms for a jazz drumset: 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, and a 14x14 floor tom on legs. The snare was 5½x14, while the bass drum was 16x20. (The Euro model shown in the photo features a 22" bass drum and a suspended 14" floor tom.) Gold Crown toms are ½" thick; snares and bass drums are 5/16" thick.

The review kit was finished in a metalized bronze wrap that had a slight greenish hue under certain lights. It reminded me of the metal foil/gold leaf finishes seen on antique furniture. Other drummers who beheld the drums had less charitable comments. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, of course, but the point is that this is a unique-looking kit.

Interestingly, the snare drum incorporated a metal wrap on the inside as well as the outside. This is apparently done in order to promote higher frequencies and sensitivity.

All drums except the kick came with zinc die-cast hoops, which added to the weight but seemed to stabilize the tuning. The snare strainer was a simple, block style, side-to-side lever unit. In the test room and at gigs it held without slipping.

The tom holders were another story. They're built on the familiar ball & socket principle. An L-arm protrudes from a plastic ball, which is encased in a metal "clam shell" that allows considerable freedom of movement. The first time I positioned the toms where I wanted them and gave the wing bolts my customary couple of twists, I had barely turned around when I heard a *clunk*. The 12" drum had slipped and taken a dive into the bass drum. (It's a credit to the metalized finish that no scarring was evident.) Then and there I learned that I'd have to crank the wing screws harder than what I consider the industry standard.

Another technical aspect that bothered me was the chromed suspension cradle that encircled the toms. From this cradle extended three *thin* strips of metal, which secured to the drum under separate lug casings. It concerned me that the weight of a tom fitted with heavy die-cast rims would rest on such a slender promise. I applied pressure on the tom rim and, sure enough, these metal strips bent noticeably. Concerned that these would be the first casualties in a backline situation, I contacted Remo.

Lane Davy, Remo VP of marketing, responded that my kit was an early model that had been rushed into service at the International Association of Jazz Educators convention and had been put through the paces by a number of pros and high-school performers. Due to player feedback from that situation, Remo has already beefed up the metal mounting strips. Lane hastened to point out that the advantage of this mounting system is that tom heads can be changed without removing the drums from the holders.

With respect to the ball & socket slippage, Lane assured me that the need for an extra turn or two of the wing nut was simply an inherent feature of this particular unit, and that all wing nuts/bolts are protected from stripping by an open-ended, "infinite turn" design.

Proof In The Pounding

The first drum I unpacked was the 14" floor tom. I set it on its legs and, without so much as a flick of a drumkey, struck it. Even though it was

tuned on the loose side, it sustained for a full five seconds! As a matter of fact, the toms all exhibited some of the longest decay times I've ever heard. To me, this indicates that everything—head, shell, and hardware—is working together for the common good.

When tuned low, the drums *rocked*. When tuned medium, they offered a nice mix of attack, tone, and sustain. And even with the heads cranked table-top tight, the toms produced a clear, non-choked tone. In fact, these drums had me aiming for definite pitches and melodic tom fills.

Remo's literature claims that the continuous, one-piece wrap of Advanced Acousticon makes for dense shells that are consistent from drum to drum. Sure enough, the review drums were well matched; there was no "odd tom out."

Did they sound somewhere between maple and birch drums, as claimed by Remo? Well, *I* thought they did. Other drummers found them a little on the bright side. My thinking is that by switching batter heads, the player could remedy any perceived overabundance of high end.

To be blunt, the bass drum was a little *too* powerful. In the testing room and at rehearsals, it packed such punch and low end that I felt it almost overshadowed the other drums. And, yes, it reminded me of that old studio drum of yesteryear—times ten! To get the bass drum onto the same page with the other drums, I had to tension the PowerStroke 3 batter and front heads tighter than I normally would.

A 14x20 bass drum might have been a better choice for this kit in terms of acoustic balance for jazz applications. However, if you're a rock player, the 16x20 provides such potential that I encourage you not to overlook the Gold Crown kit on the basis of all this muttering about "jazz."

The snare drum was the only drum that clearly announced its composite (as opposed to wood) shell. Or maybe the sound had something to do with that extra lining of metal on the inside. Although the drum worked fine at various tunings and was sensitive at all dynamic levels, rimshots were a little thin and boxy. Replacing the supplied Ambassador head with an Emperor helped. In addition, I had the strong suspicion that the die-cast hoops were adversely affecting the drum's performance. So I replaced the top hoop with a standard triple-flanged model. This helped to "open up" the sound.

Conclusion

The Remo Gold Crown is a good-sounding kit that will work in many styles beyond jazz. The Advanced Acousticon shells are cut to perfection, and the bearing edges are flawless. The drums will respond equally well to brushes or the butt ends of 5B sticks. Because the shells are of a composite material, I'd recommend them to drummers who have concerns about the effect that radical changes in temperature and humidity might have on wood shells.

I didn't get a chance to test any Remo hardware besides the tom mounts and fittings described above. But I will say that the "shell pack" was a pleasure to review. The toms really sing, the bass drum has power to spare, and the price is fair.

THE NUMBERS

Remo Gold Crown Drumset **$2,199**
(Shell pack includes 16x20 bass drum, 5½x14 snare drum, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 14x14 floor tom, tom mount, bass drum spurs, and floor-tom legs.)
(661) 294-5600, www.remo.com.

Quick Looks

Factory Metal Percussion Celtic Bells

The Celtic Bells sent to us from Factory Metal Percussion intrigued me. They looked like steel plates crafted by a medieval armor-maker. I wasn't sure how to approach them, so I just hauled off and hit them. Here's what I discovered.

An 8" Celtic Bell with jingles, mounted above a top hi-hat cymbal

To begin with, they were surprisingly tonal. When struck, they produced a solid, bell-like attack that was immediate and under full control. They also possessed lots of overtones that could be varied based on the strength of the attack and the type of stick or mallet used.

I first tried 8" and 10" Celtic Bells that were fitted with tambourine-style jingles. When I played them with sticks, I got a fairly short, musical "white-noise" sound that would be good for accents. The two sizes each spoke with a distinct voice.

When I tried rod-type sticks (in plastic and wood), the sound of the jingles stood out more. There was more shimmer and sustain, with slightly less of the bell voice. The jingles also seemed to vibrate longer, especially with a tight rod configuration.

Brushes lacked the impact to have much of an effect. You'd have to be going for something really soft and subtle to use them.

I tried soft mallets last, and the sound was in between that of sticks and rods. Mallets elicited more pitch, but less sustain. I'd use these smaller Bells for accents that carry some weight.

A 10" Celtic Bell mounted atop a ride cymbal

When the 15" and 18" Celtic Bells were struck with a stick, they had lots of overtones. The sound was like that of a cowbell, but with greater depth. Rods produced a similar sound, though it was muted in comparison to sticks. Brushes were really too light to work at all with these larger Bells.

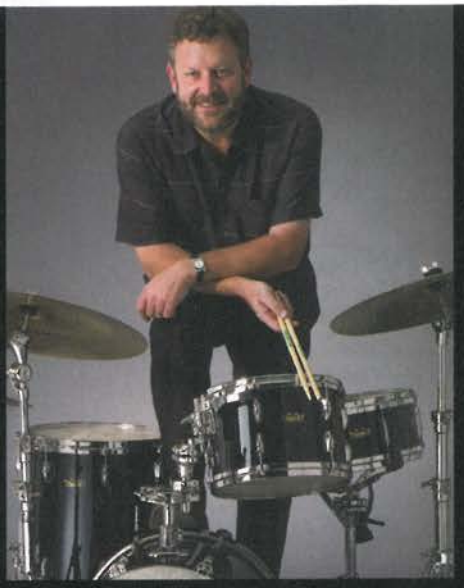
I got a pleasant surprise when I played the Bells with soft mallets. They sounded like church bells—rich with color and tone. Striking them further up on the "arm" of the cross brought out different overtones. I even tried placing them flat on a drum stool with the edges sticking out. As I struck the edge, the bell tones rang out and even had some sustain.

At first I was skeptical about when and how I could use the Celtic Bells, but I soon found lots of possibilities. Factory Metal Percussion's Web site offers suggestions, including pictures of the Celtic Bells mounted on hi-hats, or stacked above each other to create a multi-toned "bell tree." This is thoughtful stuff.

The 8" Celtic Bell with jingles lists for $45, the 10" with jingles goes for $55. The 15" Celtic Bell is priced at $65, while the 18" lists for $80.
(909) 314-9742, www.factorymetalpercussion.com.

Chap Ostrander

For Jeff Hamilton, big means playing with range, control and intensity. Because, as any jazz instructor knows, intensity is about finesse, subtlety, and playing at all dynamic levels, from loud to soft and back. Which is why Jeff prefers to play and record with a **GOLD CROWN**™ drumset with **ADVANCED ACOUSTICON**™ shells. We've taken the best qualities of wood and bettered them for incredible consistency, allowing unparalleled pitch, timbre, and projection. Our engineered composite wood is impervious to weather changes and the shells are cut to a 45° bearing edge to allow greater tuning range. And the **GOLD CROWN**™ series features die cast hoops, and optional **METALIZED**™ finishes for unique style and durablity. Plus we've innovated a tom suspension system that lets you change heads without removing the drums. All of which is great for jazz instructors, students, and anyone else who wants to make it big.



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MISSES

not suitable for some un-miked live applications

by Paul Bielewicz

Early this year Zildjian expanded their K Custom line with the addition of Special Dry crash cymbals. The new crashes—available in 14", 15", 16", 17", and 18" sizes—round out the existing Special Dry series, which previously consisted of 14" hi-hats and a 21" ride.

All of the crashes are categorized as thin. Their appearance is unique, with unfinished hammered and "scored" tops and traditional (non-brilliant) lathed bottoms. Zildjian describes the manufacturing process and sound characteristics as follows: "Radical lathing and hammering create a sound that is extremely dry and musical. Very clear articulation and focused stick definition."

Our sample lot consisted of all five of the sizes offered. For the purposes of the review, I put the 14" cymbal into its own category of small size and high pitch, the 15" and 16" cymbals together as having medium size and medium pitch, and the 17" and 18" cymbals together as having larger sizes and lower pitch.

Don't Judge A Book...

The appearance of these cymbals may initially strike the user as a negative feature. To be blunt, they look "dirty." But this is essential in order for them to produce their dry sound characteristics. This dirty look is primarily due to the lack of lathing on the upper surface of the cymbal. The raw metal is a brownish color as opposed to the standard gold or brassy color of most modern cymbals. Large hammer marks are clearly visible in seemingly random patterns on the upper surfaces. The look is completed by "scoring," which is a swirling pattern over the surface of the cymbal that creates a spiral of brighter-colored metal over the unfinished texture. In some cases, whitish powder-like oxidation is even visible on the upper surfaces.

14" Crash

Gentle riding on the surface of this cymbal produced a well-defined tone at the bell and the inner-to-middle portion of the body. As I progressed toward the outside, relatively low-pitched overtones developed. A glancing blow produced a quick response with a medium-fast to fast decay.

Although the 14" model was adequate and well defined as a small crash on its own, within the context of a full kit—and over amplification—its subtle overtones got lost. In this situation the cymbal acted as more of a low-pitched splash than as a high-pitched crash.

15" And 16" Crashes

Playing a ride pattern on the surface of the 15" cymbal produced a tone that was more defined and had fewer overtones than that of the 14". In fact, as I progressed from the inside of the body towards the outside, hardly any overtones developed until about the last inch of diameter. Those overtones were low-pitched and subtle, as they were on the 14".

Crashing on the edge produced a quick response and fast decay. This was emphasized within the context of music: When the cymbal was hit, its sound came up fast and then got out of the way. Because of its small diameter and thin weight, washing on the edge of the 15" crash didn't produce a very gratifying result. The cymbal simply moved around a lot. Even with repeated agitation it didn't build up much overtone.

The 16" crash, when ridden, was also very dry until about the last 1"of diameter. However, when it did develop overtones, they were slightly higher than those of its 14" and 15" siblings—more of a medium pitch.

Glancing blows produced a satisfying medium to medium-low crash sound that was unmistakably dry. Like its siblings, the response of the 16" is fast and the decay is exceptionally quick. But this size displayed a "musicality" not present in the smaller models. Some might describe the sound as "clangy," but it is definitely interesting and worth exploring.

After repeatedly crashing and washing on the 16" cymbal, I came to the conclusion that it might be the best representative of the dry nature of this entire line. Overtones were virtually non-existent, and even when they *were* present they were subtle and moderately pitched. Again, the cymbal tended to get lost under amplification.

17" And 18" Crashes

The 17" crash proved to be the most versatile of the group. With many of the positive characteristics of the other sizes and few of the negatives, this size was my favorite. Its overtones had a smooth high end that wasn't as "jagged" as a conventional crash of the same size might be. Playing 16th notes produced a "shimmery" effect, along with an eventual build-up of low-end overtones not found in the smaller-sized models.

Although the crash response of the 17" cymbal is quicker than that of a comparable conventional cymbal, it's decidedly slower than that of the smaller Special Dry crashes, with a less-defined attack. Keep in mind, however, that this is a characteristic of the line, and not a detriment to overall performance.

Deeper pitch, less definition, and a higher buildup of overtones describes the 18" crash in relation to the others. Another characteristic of note is that the overall volume is louder in relation to the smaller sizes, but the quick decay still remains.

The 18" is also the only size in the line with a bell worth noting. While the bells on the other sizes are small and don't particularly lend themselves to bell-oriented patterns, the bell on the 18" is well defined and very articulate. Pleasant overtones build throughout the body of the cymbal when the bell is struck repeatedly.

Conclusions

Because of the lack of "jagged" high-end overtones that generally build up with conventional crashes, the K Custom Special Dry crashes do not overwhelm the rest of the drumkit. Although they might be less versatile than conventional crashes of similar sizes, these cymbals would be well suited for studio applications, or for added color in live setups. There is no denying that they justify their name: They are indeed dry. They're also quite musical, and should meet the needs of drummers who seek taste and control.

THE NUMBERS

14"	$260
15"	$283
16"	$310
17"	$338
18"	$362

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18x24 bass drum offers big yet controllable sound

7x14 1-ply walnut snare has distinctive tonal characteristics

MISSES

very expensive

Review by Rick Van Horn

Photos by Jim Esposito

I don't generally start a review by talking about the appearance of a drum. But it's just unavoidable here. C&C Abalone drums are, quite simply, drop-dead *gorgeous*.

C&C's Bill Cardwell is a drum builder from Kansas City whose personal taste runs to vintage sounds and styles. A few years ago he got to thinking about a finish offered by Ludwig in the 1930s, called Abalone Pearl. Although it was only a plastic wrap, it became one of the most sought-after finishes of the era.

New Vintage Abalone drums from C&C are not wrapped in plastic. Bill Cardwell creates the beautiful finishes on these drums by laying on small, ultra-thin sections of genuine abalone and sea-snail shell. It's practically a mosaic operation, using an adhesive process that took Bill three years to finalize. The natural shell material has myriad colors, along with depth and reflectivity that simply cannot be duplicated artificially. And no two pieces are alike, so every C&C Abalone drum is unique. The effect is enhanced by C&C's very small tube lugs, which don't distract from the beauty of the drumshells.

Sometimes Bill combines the natural look of the abalone with a coloring process of his own. Our review kit, for example, started with the same Paua Abalone finish that's on the additional 4½x14

Our review kit was covered in natural Paua Abalone shell, to which a burnt orange finish was added.

snare drum we received. Then Bill applied a burnt orange finish. While the process took a lot of the natural colors out, it created a striking and totally original look.

In order to protect the color and depth of the shell finish, C&C Abalone drums are coated with very high-quality polyurethane, then sanded and buffed. When I questioned Bill about the durability of the natural-shell finish, he told me that the drums would fare just fine if given the same care that should be given to any high-end lacquered drums.

Drumkit Sound

Bill expressed his acoustic goals for our review kit as follows: "It's designed to articulate at all volumes, mike up easily, have *lots* of attack, and still be able to work in a small club (with no mikes) and not dominate the sound."

To begin with, Bill believes that because of the abalone shell's thinness and organic nature, it has much less of an effect on the sound of the drum than a conventional drum covering would. While I didn't A/B our review drums to any covered models, I did find that they all sounded incredibly open and resonant—much like the sound of drums with lacquered finishes.

Bass Drum

Believe it or not, in all my years of doing reviews for *Modern Drummer*, I've never reviewed a 24" bass drum. Up until very recently, big bass drums hadn't been in vogue for anything other than high-volume arena rock or big band jazz, so most manufacturers offered their kits with 22" (or smaller) bass drums. Thus those sizes have been the norm for our reviews.

Well, I may have been missing the boat. I really enjoyed the depth, projection, and, well...the sheer *bigness* of the sound of the 18x24 C&C bass drum. That's not to say it was inordinately boomy or uncontrolled. On the contrary, the head combination it came with—a self-muffled Aquarian Super Kick II batter and a ported smooth white logo front head—gave it a punchier and more "gated" sound than I expected. And this was with nothing inside the drum. That sound would allow it to meet Bill Cardwell's goal of being useful in an unmiked club situation, while still producing oodles of depth. The drum also retained plenty of power and volume, which allowed me to play in a very relaxed manner and still get a big sound. Now I know why this size is so popular with big band drummers.

Just to see what the other extreme might be, I swapped the Super Kick batter for a clear Remo Emperor, and put an unported (but slightly self-muffled) PowerStroke 3 head on the front. *There* was the BOOM I expected. This sound would be much more than most small clubs would call for, and would probably be more than most microphones could handle. But then I tried Simon Phillips' muffling method of taping rolled-up towels around the edges of the heads. I got a big, open sound that rumbled like thunder but didn't ring on for so long as to make miking impractical or quick pedal patterns indistinct. Now I know why this size is so popular with arena-rock drummers.

Toms

The 9x13 rack tom seemed in correct proportion to the 18x24 bass drum. Anything smaller would have looked (and probably sounded) positively *dinky*. Of course, with a big bass drum and a big rack tom, positioning becomes an issue. There was no tom mount on the bass drum. Instead, Bill

The rack tom's suspension mount is also covered in Paua Abalone.

Cardwell shipped the kit with a short ball & socket tom arm, which I simply clamped to a heavy-duty cymbal stand.

The drum's already full sound was enhanced by a suspension system, giving it tons of resonance and projection. And in a nice cosmetic touch that I've never seen from any other drum manufacturer, that suspension mount was almost totally covered with the same Abalone material as was on the drumshells.

The rack tom and the 14x16 floor tom both featured white-coated Remo Emperor heads—which provided plenty of stick attack—as well as clear Ambassador bottom heads for resonance. Both drums offered wide tuning ranges, from a very "wet," fat, loose-head sound to very clean, pure tones when the heads were tightened up. This tuning range helped to keep the kit from being a one-dimensional "loud rock" instrument.

Snare Drum

Also appropriate for the size of the kit was the matching 7x14 10-ply maple snare drum. It was a ten-lug model fitted with a coated Ambassador batter, steel rims, a Trick GS007 snare throwoff, and Puresound Percussion 20-strand custom snares. Its warm and woody overall tonal character was consistent with maple-ply construction. It had a wide tuning range, but it really shone with the heads at a medium-to-low tension. With that setup the drum produced a great '70s/'80s arena-rock sound that went well with the size of the kit.

On the other hand, the drum was surprisingly crisp at higher tensions, producing a very contemporary, cutting sound while retaining the body that was provided by the 7"-deep shell. Rimshots were lively when the drum was unmuffled, while only a slight amount of muffling reduced overring for a distinct, articulate stick response. This was a very good all-purpose drum, which can't be said for all 7x14 models.

Additional Snare Drums

According to Bill Cardwell, "C&C is really a 'have it your way' company. Our greatest satisfaction is having a drummer visualize a drum—in look

This collage shows the natural beauty of C&C's Abalone finishes. From left to right, they are: Blackheart, Sky Blue Donkey, and Paua.

From left: 7x14 1-ply walnut snare, 6x14 1-ply maple snare, 4½x14 10-ply maple snare

and sound—and then being able to make that vision a reality." Well, the Abalone snare drums he sent in addition to our review kit are certainly visions to *look* at. Now let's talk about their sound.

4½x14 10-Ply Maple

This drum came with ten lugs, steel rims, a Trick GS007 throw-off, Puresound Percussion 20-strand snares, and a coated Emperor batter. It was finished in Natural Paua Abalone.

Out of the box the drum had a medium head tension and loose snare tension, which gave it an old 1930s-jazz, N'awlins buzz-roll quality. Lots of fun, but perhaps not applicable to many gigs these days. But when the snares and heads were tightened up, this was the firecracker of the snare drum group. It sounded crisp and bright, with the crack and cut you'd expect from a drum this shallow. But it also had admirable body and warmth. Rimshots really sang out, and brush response was excellent.

6x14 1-Ply Maple

It's not surprising that this drum had a very vintage sound, because C&C's 1-ply solid wood shells are built to the old Slingerland Radio King specs. The edges feature a slightly rounded 45° back cut and a sharp 45° inside cut. Bill Cardwell doesn't take the back cut to the center of the shell, but instead leaves it more toward the outside portion. This drum was fitted with 1" reinforcement hoops, steel rims, a Nickel Drumworks throw-off, Puresound snares, and a coated Ambassador batter.

The solid maple drum had great snare response and sticking articulation. Its 6" depth provided body and a full tonality, but it didn't take the overall sound too far into the lowlands. This drum also had my favorite finish (despite its name): Sky Blue Donkey Abalone.

7x14 1-Ply Walnut

This drum also came with reinforcement hoops, die-cast rims, the Trick throw-off, Puresound snares, and a coated Emperor batter. Generally speaking, it sounded brighter and a little less warm than the solid maple did. When I tuned it to a medium tension, its shell depth and the thickness of its batter head gave it full-bodied sound, without tubbiness. It also had outstanding articulation and snare response.

At higher tensions, the reflectivity of the solid walnut shell gave the drum "bullet-through-the-brain" penetration, without sounding thin or one-dimensional. And the die-cast rims helped rimshots to cut like crazy. This was my favorite snare drum for sound. Its Blackheart Abalone finish wasn't hard to look at, either.

Conclusion

While I was reviewing the C&C Abalone drums, I happened across a copy of *Car & Driver* in which the new Porsche Carrera GT sports car was reviewed to gushing praise. I've never driven a Carrera, but I know just how that reviewer felt.

Of course, a Porsche is expensive, and so are top-quality custom-made drums. A handcrafted Abalone-shell finish adds even more to the cost factor. So C&C Abalone drums are unquestionably at the top of the price scale. But considering that they combine the best elements of vintage and contemporary drums, that they're made with impeccable craftsmanship, and that their finishes are almost indescribably beautiful, I'm inclined to say that they're worth every penny.

THE NUMBERS

Four-piece maple kit; Burnt Orange Abalone finish **$5,600**
(includes 18x24 10-ply bass drum, 9x13 8-ply rack tom, 14x16 8-ply floor tom, and 7x14 10-ply snare drum. Hardware includes suspension tom mount, bass drum spurs, and floor tom legs.)

4½x14 10-ply maple snare; Paua Abalone finish **$1,125**
6x14 1-ply maple snare; Sky Blue Donkey Abalone finish **$1,425**
7x14 1-ply walnut snare; Blackheart Abalone finish **$1,675**

(Note: Covered, striped, and custom painted finishes are available on all drums at lower prices. Snare drums are fitted with Nickel Drumworks or Trick GS007 strainers, depending on the customer's wishes. All drums are available with die-cast hoops.)

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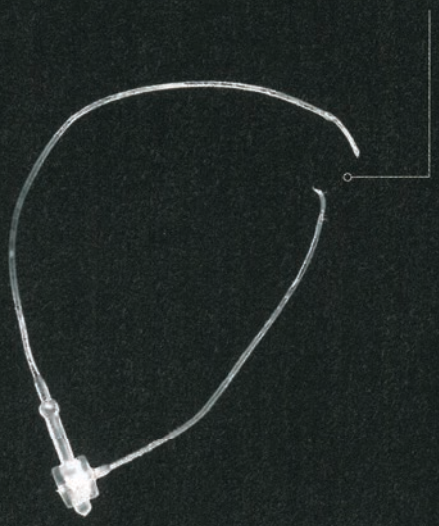
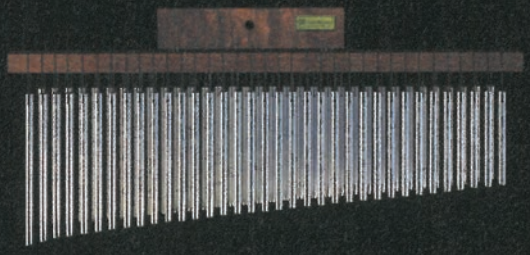


This is what some companies use to make chimes.
To us, it's just a plastic tie—meant for temporarily attaching price tags to clothing.
Not something we would use to make a serious musical instrument.

We feel keeping all the bars attached is important to the sound of the instrument.
That's why our chimes are hand-tied, one-bar-at-a-time. Once each knot is set, it's sealed and locked with permanent resin. Now it would take 50-pounds to break our braided cord.
If that seems like overkill—just remember, this is all we do. All day, everyday.



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Latin Percussion Santana Series Aspire Congas And Bongos

Worthy Namesakes For A Great Artist

HITS
great visual design

good value

MISSES
bongos sound a bit thin

by Norman Arnold

Latin Percussion's new Santana Aspire congas and bongos are an exciting visual twist on an LP favorite. The drums celebrate the career of Carlos Santana with artwork based on the look and color schemes of Santana album covers from *Abraxas* to *Supernatural*.

The groovy designs include painted drums and guitars with the name "Carlos" beside them. The images are actually painted on fabric, which is then wrapped around the congas and bongos before being sealed with a clear sealer and a glosscoat to protect the design for years to come. Cool, huh?

For those unfamiliar with LP's Aspire line, it's an entry-level series of fiberglass drums that's outstanding for beginners, classrooms, churches, and anyone on a limited budget who wants as much bang for the buck as possible. The new graphic designs really up that "bang factor."

The Congas

All the drums in this series are 28" high. LP offers a package of the 10" quinto and 11" conga. A 12" tumba drum (not reviewed) is available separately. All three drums come with similar graphic designs and are equipped with rawhide skins, Gold Tone hardware, and EZ Curve rims. The gold finish on the hardware is a pretty fancy look for drums in this price range. The quality of workmanship is also high. The EZ Curve rims sit low on the drumheads and are very easy on the hands.

The 10" and 11" drums we reviewed were light and easy to move around. Although the drums don't have handles, they could easily be carried by the rims or by one of the lugs.

The 10"/11" conga set comes with a stand for playing the drums while standing. It sets up easily, with the drums flat on the stand and spaced well apart. The stand isn't the sturdiest of LP models, but considering the light weight of the drums, it should be adequate in most situations.

Conga Sound

It took only a moment to get the drums tuned and ready to play. When I played while seated—with the drums tilted a bit on a hardwood floor—the tone of the quinto was really solid. Slaps sounded great against the rawhide head. The conga also provided plenty of tone, and was very consistent. These won't be the beefiest-sounding drums you'll ever play, but they sure are great for lots of situations. (If you need more low end, you could try the tumba.)

I recorded the Aspire quinto and conga in the studio, and was really pleased with their sound. On some groovy '60s tracks—and of course some Santana-inspired tracks—the drums sounded really punchy and crisp. They also worked well for traditional Latin sounds—with one limitation. I like to play a conga pattern with my left hand while playing a cascara on the side of the conga with a stick in my right hand. But I might have second thoughts about wailing with a stick on the side of a drum with a design that looks this good.

The Bongos

The Santana series bongos come with the same design and pattern featured on the congas. They also have the same Gold Tone hardware and EZ Curve rims, and are

shipped with rawhide heads. The Cuban-style steel bottoms are very solid, and they definitely give these drums some weight.

Bongo Sound

When I tuned the bongos and played them for a while, I wasn't overly excited about their sound. There wasn't a lot of resonance, nor was there much of the sharp, crisp attack that's needed for live playing. But bongos are notoriously sensitive to head selection, and my impressions might have just been due to the heads on our review models. Also, since bongos tend to be tuned very high, those heads might have "come around" after a longer period of breaking in.

To be fair, when I recorded the bongos—close-miked, with a mic' that tends to boost a bit of the high end—I thought they sounded fine. So if the Aspire Santana bongos are the perfect look and price range for you, I encourage you to check them out at your local store to determine whether they sound as you would like them to.

Conclusion

The LP Aspire Santana congas and bongos are great-looking drums with even greater-looking price tags. And they certainly sound like a good set of LPs. Carlos should be proud.

THE NUMBERS

10" quinto and 11" conga, with stand (LPA625F-SNG) **$599**
6¾" and 8" bongos (LPA602F-SNG) **$399**
(973) 478-6903, www.lpmusic.com.

Quick Looks

DW 9909 Bass Drum/Percussion Lifter

Call me cranky, but I'm beginning to rethink this whole "converting floor toms to bass drums" thing. It's certainly not that I think drummers' options should be restricted, and I'm as big a hardware geek as anybody. It's just that with every attempt to circumvent actually buying a smaller drum with traditional, attached hardware, we're forced to deal with some new pragmatic issues.

The device I've been using to support my leg-less 12x20 bass drum is a big, black, bulky affair that threatens to tear a hole through my hardware bag whenever I stuff it in there before a gig. But the thing holds my drum pretty darned solidly, and it requires no setup. It just doesn't look so sexy, and it's yet another piece of (heavy) gear I have to deal with.

DW's 9909 Bass Drum/Percussion Lifter certainly solves the visual problem. Its shiny, complex collection of ratchets, wing nuts, and tubes is a gear lover's delight. And it packs up into a fairly compact unit for travel. But its infinite adjustability, which certainly makes it more flexible than comparable items on the market, also makes the process of consistently arriving at the correct positioning an art *and* a craft. Seriously, even with the included instructions, I was fiddling with this thing for the better part of an hour before I came up with the perfect setup. (Lugs, hoops, and whatever else is attached to your drum can make for a complicated surface to negotiate—increasingly so, the smaller the drum.)

Now, conceivably, the re-printable chart included in the instructions—and your own memory—can help you repeat your "diagram" as needed. But some of the adjustments you'll need to make in order to take full advantage of the 9909's portability have infinite parameters. So at least a little tweaking will be required every time. Frankly, when I'm setting up on an always too-dark stage, I like to keep my tweaking (read: stress level) to a minimum.

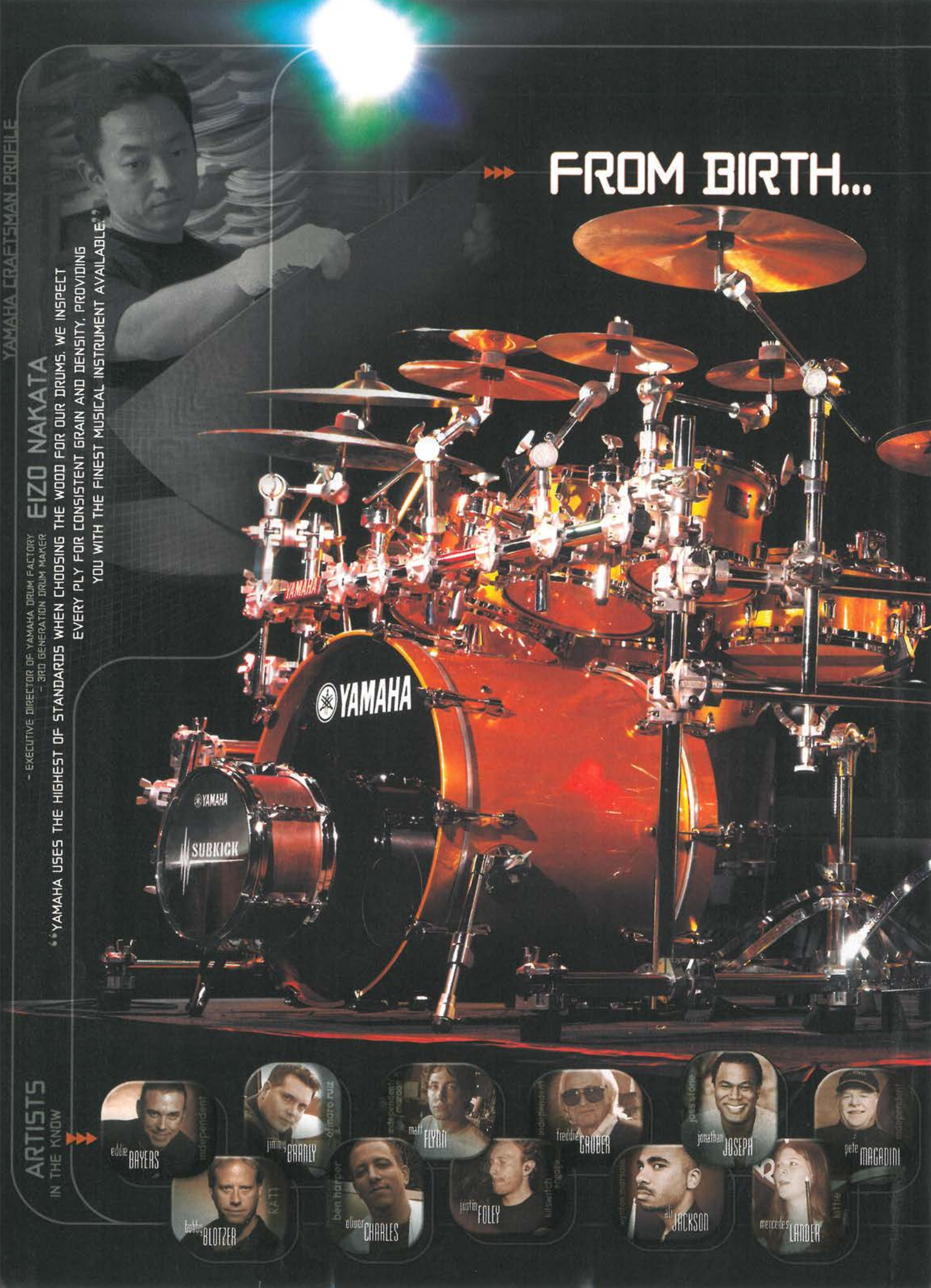
To be fair, the DW Lifter is beautifully made, and it very well may allow you to play instruments with your feet that you've previously been unable to—like congas, djembes, and other odd-shaped drums. My suggestion would be to get your hands on one and experiment with it for a while, in order to decide whether its positives outweigh its negatives in regards to your unique needs. And don't forget to really lay into that "bass drum." I was less than happy with the amount of "creep" the Lifter allowed. But each drummer's playing style is different, and you might be perfectly happy on this score. The DW 9909 Bass Drum/Percussion Lifter retails at $198.99.

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

Adam Budofsky

YAMAHA CRAFTSMAN PROFILE

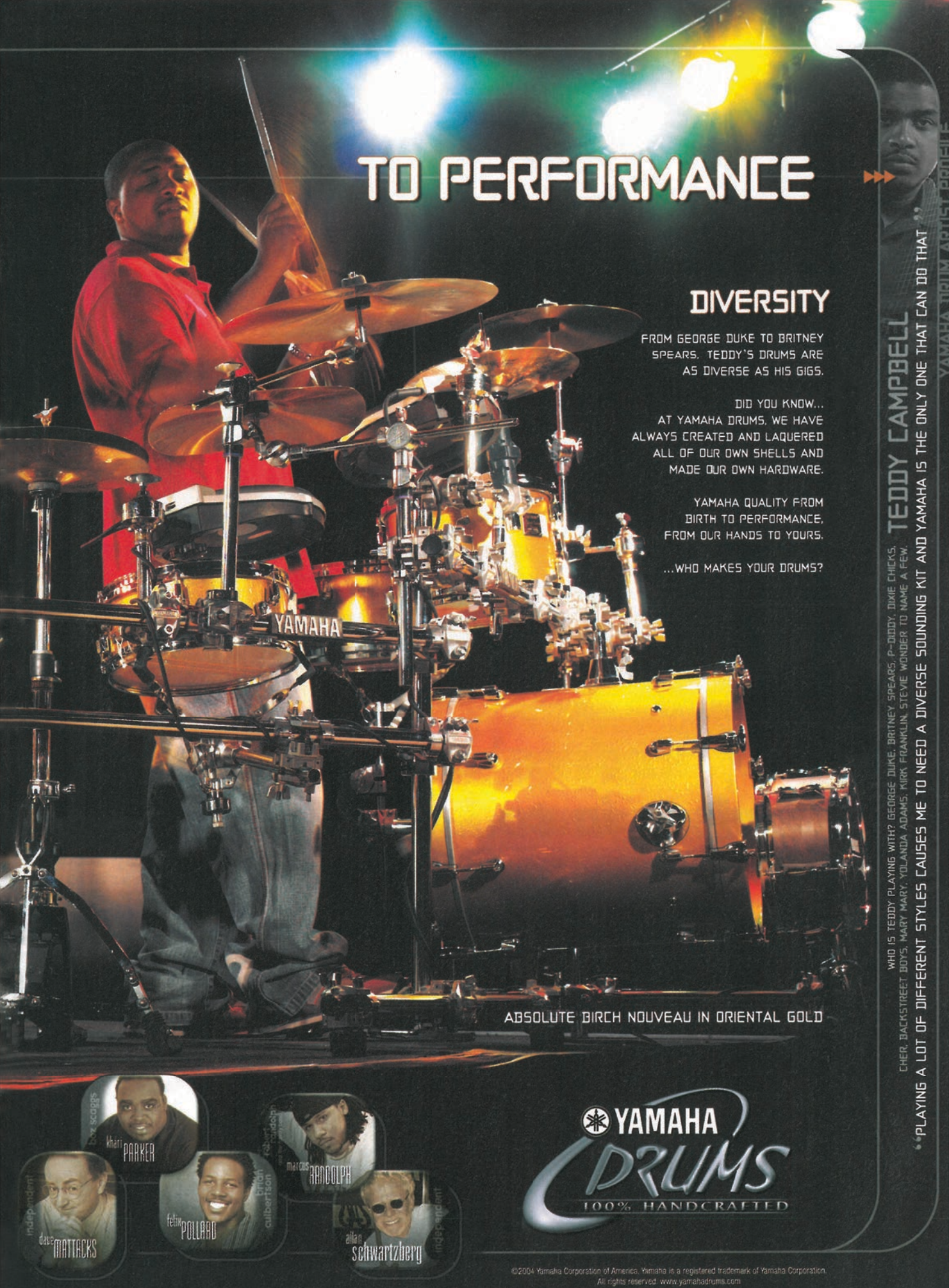
FROM BIRTH...



EIZO NAKATA
– EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF YAMAHA DRUM FACTORY
– 3RD GENERATION DRUM MAKER

"YAMAHA USES THE HIGHEST OF STANDARDS WHEN CHOOSING THE WOOD FOR OUR DRUMS. WE INSPECT EVERY PLY FOR CONSISTENT GRAIN AND DENSITY. PROVIDING YOU WITH THE FINEST MUSICAL INSTRUMENT AVAILABLE."

ARTISTS IN THE KNOW


TO PERFORMANCE
DIVERSITY
FROM GEORGE DUKE TO BRITNEY SPEARS, TEDDY'S DRUMS ARE AS DIVERSE AS HIS GIGS.
DID YOU KNOW... AT YAMAHA DRUMS, WE HAVE ALWAYS CREATED AND LAQUERED ALL OF OUR OWN SHELLS AND MADE OUR OWN HARDWARE.
YAMAHA QUALITY FROM BIRTH TO PERFORMANCE, FROM OUR HANDS TO YOURS.
...WHO MAKES YOUR DRUMS?
YAMAHA
ABSOLUTE BIRCH NOUVEAU IN ORIENTAL GOLD
TEDDY CAMPBELL
"PLAYING A LOT OF DIFFERENT STYLES CAUSES ME TO NEED A DIVERSE SOUNDING KIT AND YAMAHA IS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN DO THAT."
WHO IS TEDDY PLAYING WITH? GEORGE DUKE, BRITNEY SPEARS, P-DIDDY, DIXIE CHICKS, CHER, BACKSTREET BOYS, MARY MARY, YOLANDA ADAMS, KIRK FRANKLIN, STEVIE WONDER TO NAME A FEW.
YAMAHA DRUMS
100% HANDCRAFTED
boz scaggs
khalil PARKER
marcus RANDOLPH
robert randolph
brian quinberson
independent
dave MATTACKS
felix POLLARD
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independent

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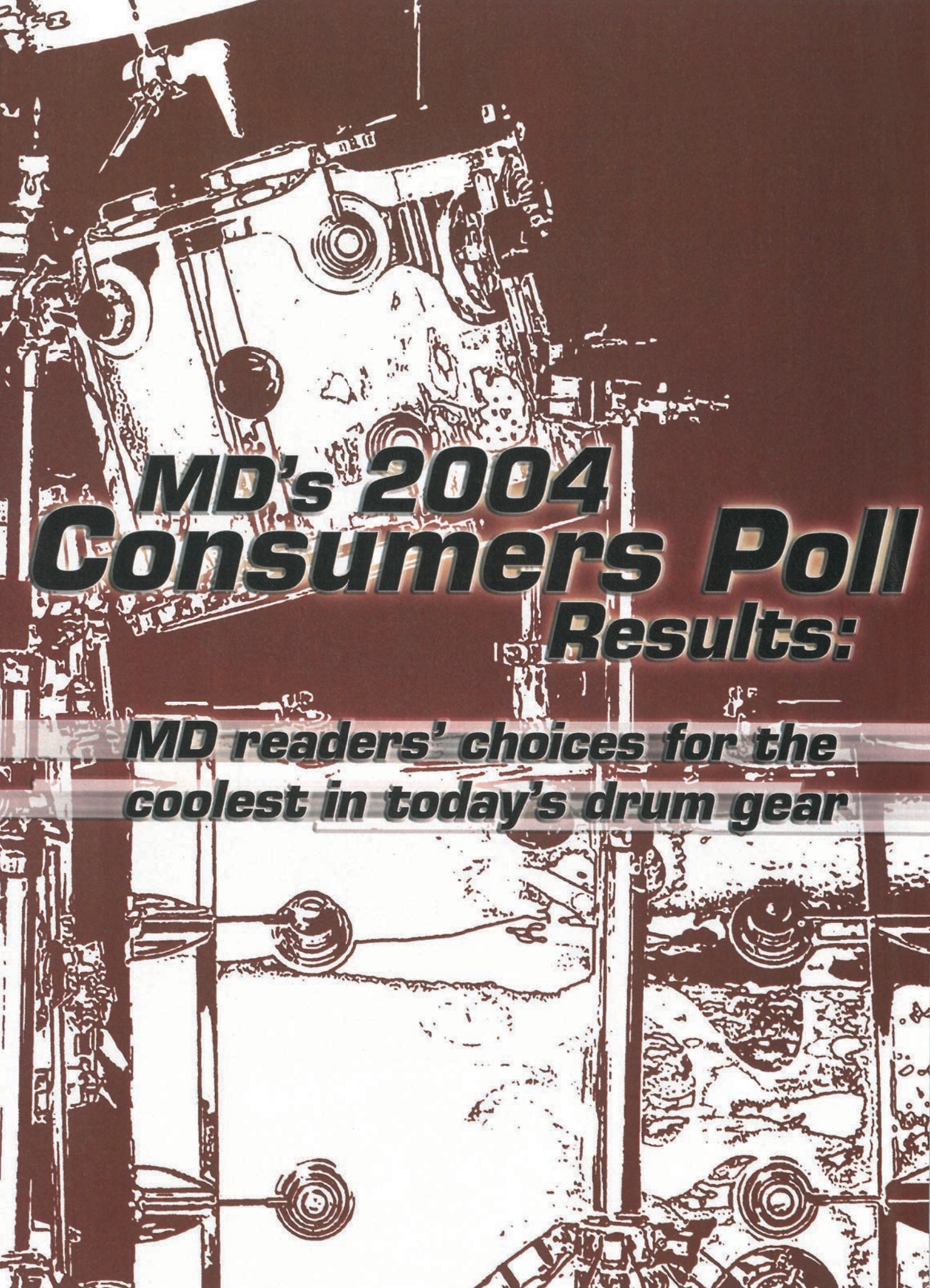


MD's 2004 Consumers Poll Results:

MD readers' choices for the coolest in today's drum gear

Most Innovative Company

Acoustic Drum Company: Pearl led this field, with 27% of the total vote. Pearl products noted for their innovation included new SBX Session Series birch kits, the ever-improving Export series, and the BC-2000 boom cymbal stand.

Also figuring highly in this category were Drum Workshop (18.9%) and Yamaha (13.5%). DW was cited for their exotic finishes and 9000 series pedals, while Yamaha received props for the application of the Nouveau hardware design to several of its drum lines.

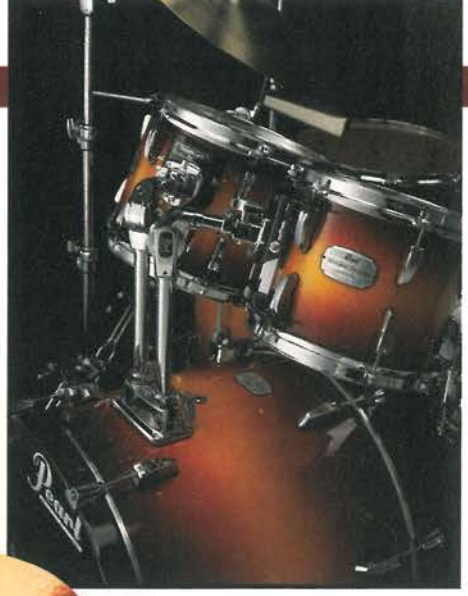
Cymbal Company: Zildjian took top honors with 42.9% of the vote. The company was lauded for the development of the K Custom Session and ZXT Titanium series, along with K Custom Special Dry crashes.

Sabian followed with 37.1% of the vote, and was cited for its Paragon series. Paiste garnered 14.3%, with the recently introduced New Signature Dark Energy models receiving the greatest comment.

Percussion Company: The award in this category went to Latin Percussion, who took 63.3% of the vote. LP was lauded for constant development of new musical products like the colorful and affordable Aspire Santana congas and bongos, as well as the One Shot Live shaker. Toca received 37.1% of the vote, with comments about their Sheila E Players percussion series. Pearl (with 14.3% of the vote) was cited for the expansion of their conga line with signature models from Richie Flores and Bobby Allende.

Electronics Company: This category was dominated by Roland, with 62% of the vote. Readers cited Roland's new V-hi-hat (part of their high-end TD-20S-BK kit package) and new affordable V-Compact series. Other contenders in this category included Yamaha (17.2%), along with Audix microphones and Hart Dynamics electronic percussion (tied at 6.9%). Voters appreciated Yamaha's affordable DTXPRESS kits, Audix's line of dedicated drum microphones, and Hart's extensive line of pad kits.

Accessory Company: Gibraltar earned 12.1% of the votes in this very crowded category. Along with their well-known rack systems, their 8600 series lightweight flat-base hardware was lauded. Other notable finishers in this category included LP (6%), along with Evans, Remo, Pro-Mark, Vic Firth, and Puresound Percussion (each with 3%).



The introduction of SBX Session all-birch drumkits helped Pearl to earn this year's award for most innovative drum company.

Zildjian was named most innovative cymbal company for products like the K Custom Session and ZXT Titanium series. The company was also cited for best quality and craftsmanship, along with consumer service.

Best Quality And Craftsmanship

Classic Congas gained reader attention for Latin Percussion, contributing to the company's sweep of all the awards in the percussion category.

Acoustic Drum Company: Drum Workshop took this category with 41.7% of the vote. Voters commented on DW's drum finishes, handcrafted shells, and durable pedals and hardware.

Other contenders were Yamaha (16.7%), Pearl (13.9%), and Tama (11.1%). Advocates of each company cited such factors as shell construction, hardware durability, quality of finishes, and mounting designs.

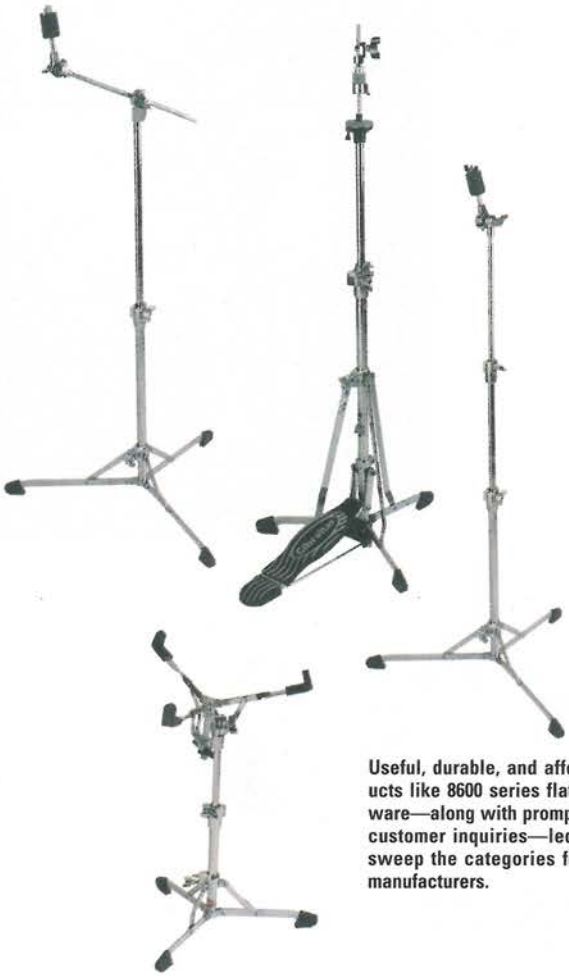
Cymbal Company: Zildjian won this category with 60% of the vote. Comments reflected the cymbals' durability, consistency of sound, and finishes. Sabian and Paiste received 25.7% and 11.4% of the vote, respectively.

Percussion Company: LP dominated this field with 80% of the vote. Voters mentioned the consistency of sound of LP's congas and other drums, as well as the reliability and functional designs of their blocks, bells, and accessories. A newcomer in this category was TreeWorks, who received 6.6% of the vote in recognition of their handcrafted chimes. Also noted for their quality were products from Pearl and Toca, who tied at 3.3%.

Electronics Company: Roland took first in this category, with 80% of the total vote. Voters commented on how easy Roland products were to understand and perform with, and how well they held up under heavy use. Other top finishers included Yamaha (8%) and Audix (4%).

Accessory Company: Gibraltar earned 12.9% of the votes in this category. Voters cited the durability and functionality of their racks, multi-clamps, and percussion mounting devices. Other notable finishers in this category included Remo (9.7%) along with Pro-Mark and Vic Firth (tied at 6.5%).

The high-end TD-20S-BK V-Pro electronic kit—along with a habit of "thinking like drummers"—helped Roland win all the electronics categories.



Useful, durable, and affordable products like 8600 series flat-based hardware—along with prompt response to customer inquiries—led Gibraltar to sweep the categories for accessory manufacturers.

Most Consumer/ Service Oriented Company

Many people think of "consumer service" mainly in terms of requests for product information or warranty repairs. However, other customer-service activities received mention—and votes. These included informative Web sites, phone calls answered promptly, and reasonable pricing. These criteria for voting were cited repeatedly in every manufacturer category, so we won't repeat them. Here's our list of winners and runners-up in this important department.

Acoustic Drum Company: DW, with 31.2%, followed by Pearl (25%) and Tama (18.8%). Voters appreciated DW's build-your-own-kit feature and artist information on their Web site, along with extensive and attractive printed product information.

Cymbal Company: Zildjian led this field with 45% of the vote. Sabian took 35.5%, while Paiste received 16.1%. Zildjian was repeatedly applauded for their responsiveness to individual customer inquiries and problems.

Percussion Company: LP took top honors here (with 83% of the vote). LP's online information and rapid response to problem calls received praise. Toca was next with 8.3%, followed by Pearl (4.2%).

Electronics Company: Roland led the field with 78.3% of the vote. They were cited for their warranty service, clear manuals, and customer-information hotlines. Following Roland, five other manufacturers were equally noted for their helpfulness: ddrum, Yamaha, Hart Dynamics, Audix, and Shure.

Accessory Company: Gibraltar took top honors here (with 14.8% of the vote), due primarily to the sheer breadth and usefulness of their product lines, along with excellent phone response to problems. Pro-Mark and Vic Firth followed, tied at 11.1%.

Most Interesting Ad/Marketing Campaign

This year, voters expressed their regard for a *type* of ad, rather than for any specific one. As a result, there was no clear winner in this category. *MD* readers said they particularly dig two-page, full-color spreads that feature big photos of cool drumsets, with as little text as possible. Examples cited included Yamaha's Absolute Birch Nouveau ad in the January '04 issue, Tama's Exotix Volcanic Fire ad in April, Pearl's Export EXR ad in May, and DW's Neil Peart Custom Kit ad in August.

Still, creativity is not ignored in our polls. Zildjian was cited for their K Custom Special Dry "cymbal on a clothesline" series, and Alchemy cymbals for their "thin line between good and bad" cymbal–vs.–trash-can lid ads.

Most Valuable Product

This year, 24% of *MD*'s voters singled out DW's Collector's Series drums as most valuable product. Comments about the winner included, "DW drums offer attention to detail while giving consumers exactly what they're looking for," "They lead the field in quality, sound, and appearance," and "They've come to be the standard for live playing and recording."

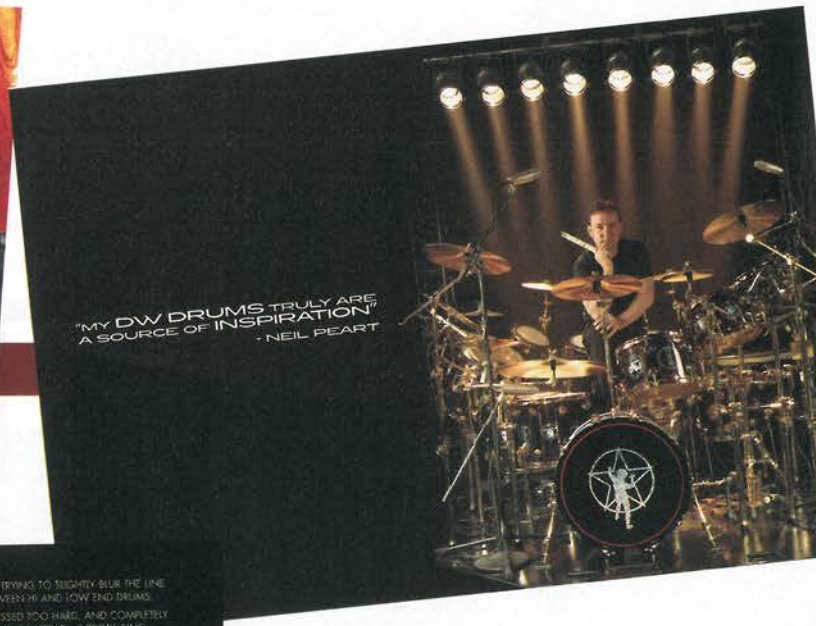
Other acoustic drums receiving voter recognition included Yamaha's Maple Custom Absolute Nouveau, Pearl's Export, and Tama's Starclassic series.

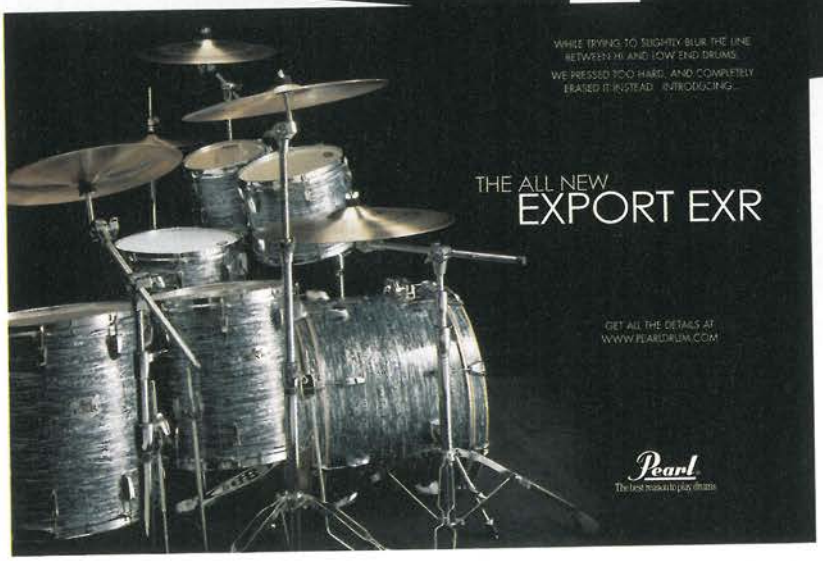
The leading vote getters for cymbals were Zildjian's K Custom Session series (developed with Steve Gadd) and Sabian's Paragon series (developed with Neil Peart). UFIP's Class series splashes were also singled out.

In the area of electronics, MVP votes went to Roland's high-end V-Pro kit. Tama's useful Rhythm Watch electronic timekeeper was also noted.

Among accessories, DW's 9000 series pedals followed the MVP winner as the next-highest vote getter. Other accessory items favored by poll respondents included Pearl's BC 2000 boom cymbal stand, Vater Stewart Copeland model drumsticks, and HQ Percussion RealFeel practice pads.

Drum Workshop's Collector's Series drumkits were named this year's most valuable product.




WHILE TRYING TO SLIGHTLY BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN HI AND LOW END DRUMS,
WE PRESSED TOO HARD, AND COMPLETELY ERASED IT INSTEAD. INTRODUCING...
THE ALL NEW
EXPORT EXR
GET ALL THE DETAILS AT WWW.PEARLDRUM.COM
Pearl

Well, that's it for the 2004 poll. We thank all those who voted, and we congratulate all of the winners. We'll let another year of product development take place, and then we'll ask for your opinions about those products next June in the ninth annual *MD* Consumers Poll.

Tallying The Votes

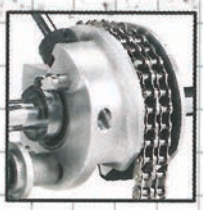
Each winner's vote tally is expressed as a percentage of the total number of votes cast in that category. (Some categories received greater responses than others did.) Tallies and comments were also included for other manufacturers who figured highly in each category, as a way of recognizing their popularity among the *MD* readership.

DW BY DESIGN

PATENTED DESIGN FEATURES:

ADJUSTABLE CAM

FLOATING SPRING ASSEMBLY



DOUBLE CHAIN & ROTOR DRIVE

DELTA TRI-BEARING HINGE

9000 SERIES

FLOATING ROTOR BASS DRUM PEDAL

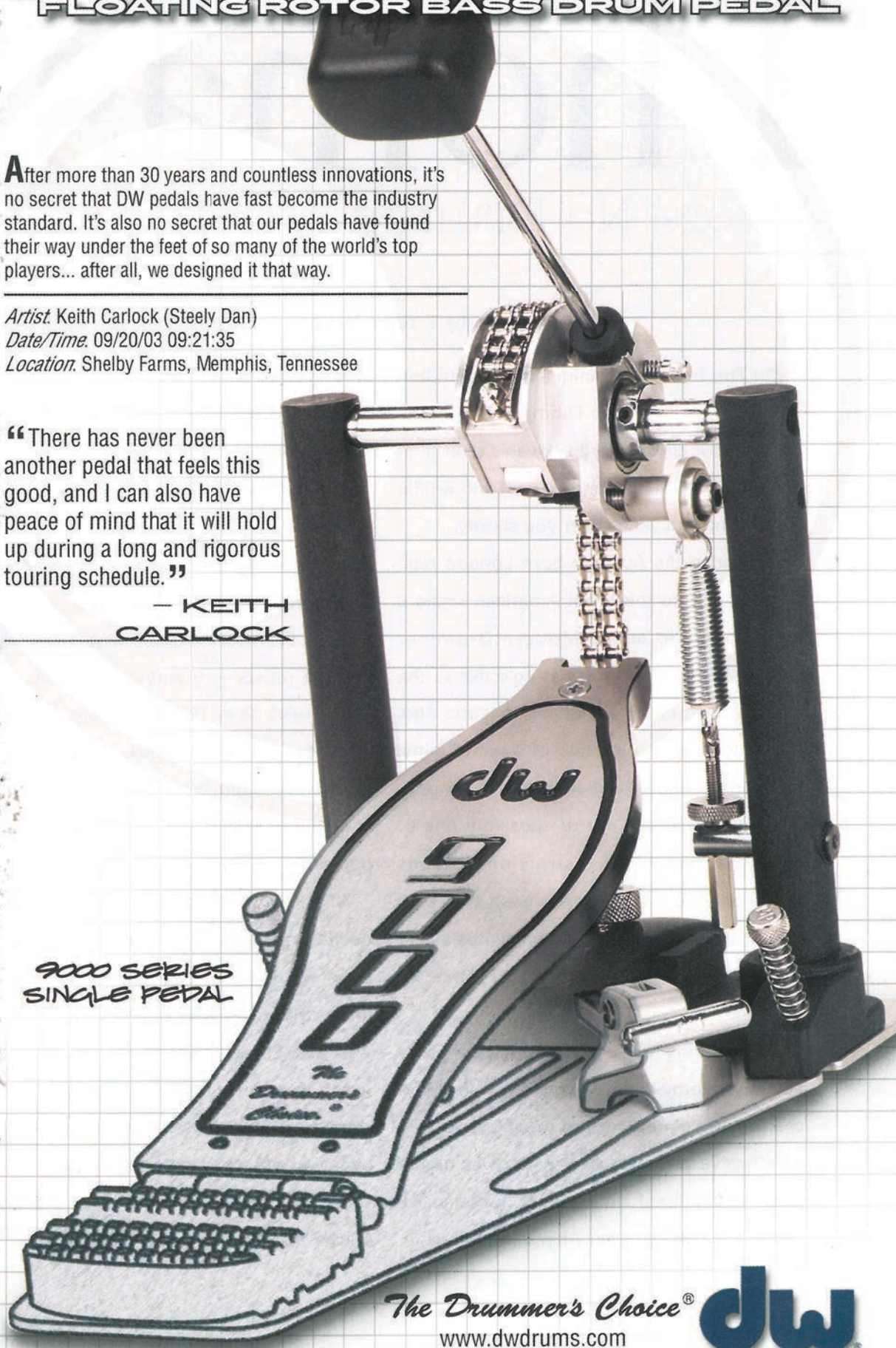
After more than 30 years and countless innovations, it's no secret that DW pedals have fast become the industry standard. It's also no secret that our pedals have found their way under the feet of so many of the world's top players... after all, we designed it that way.

Artist. Keith Carlock (Steely Dan)
Date/Time. 09/20/03 09:21:35
Location. Shelby Farms, Memphis, Tennessee

"There has never been another pedal that feels this good, and I can also have peace of mind that it will hold up during a long and rigorous touring schedule."

— KEITH CARLOCK

9000 SERIES SINGLE PEDAL



The Drummer's Choice®

www.dwdrums.com

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dw

Thomas L

Where No Drummer Has Gone Before

by T. Bruce Wittet

If The Rock is the undisputed champion of wrestling, then Thomas Lang is the king of clinics. If you haven't seen him, rest assured he's hot on the circuit and will be performing at a venue near you shortly.

Ever since the Austrian-born London resident burst onto the North American scene a few years ago at the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend, Thomas Lang's rise to the top has been nothing short of meteoric. He's currently finishing leg two of a world clinic tour, promoting a best-selling Hudson double-DVD, *Creative Control*—possibly one of the most meticulous instructional videos *ever*—and he's about to unleash two solo CDs. A signature series of Meinl cymbals bear his name, as does a unique practice kit by Remo.

Comparisons to The Rock are not as wacky as they seem. Thomas is a good-looking, charismatic dude who's in great shape; he's an effective public speaker who gives organized, motivational clinics; and, not least, he delivers *knockout* chops. After witnessing him play drums, either in clinic or on his DVD, there is no question that Thomas Lang can execute any pattern that comes to mind—with his hands, feet, or any combination thereof.

He can also groove as deep as it takes. This is important to Thomas because, as he will explain, his massive technical prowess exists for one reason—to serve the music. Yeah, yeah, we've heard *that* one before, but in this instance he's dead serious. Lang's powerful groove keeps him working with the crème de la crème of British and continental European pop stars.

Which brings us to the crux: If the industry decided to henceforth ban clinics, Thomas Lang wouldn't be fazed in the least. If his grand drumming tours of China, New Zealand, Australia, Europe, Canada, the US, and South America were to evaporate, Lang's day job would remain as it was before: producing his own and others' music, drumming on sessions, and touring the arenas of the world. Clinics, for Thomas, are icing on the cake.

ang

Dana Nitschke

It's not that Lang doesn't enjoy playing for gatherings of drummers; it's that his identity doesn't hinge on it. In fact, as Thomas admits in this interview, the sort of mega chops he trots out for drummers are those he developed *as a hobby*—his words. Sure, he undertook formal studies at an Austrian conservatory and with private teachers to hone his craft. But then he went further than most would consider necessary, alone into the nether regions of technique. He discovered that if he was utterly merciless in his focus and practice routine, he could make his feet do anything his hands do. *Anything.*

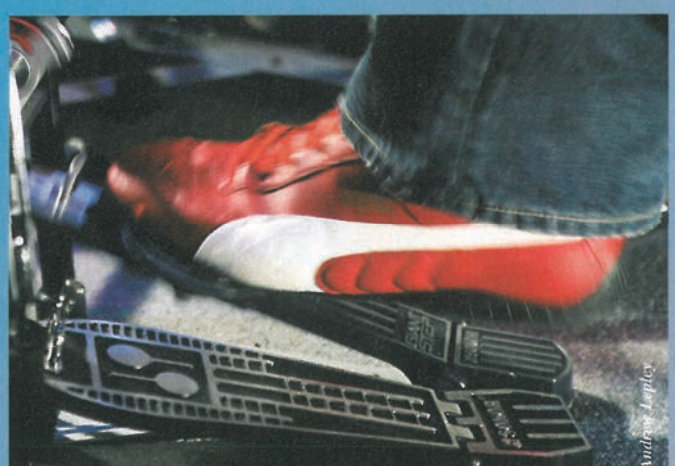
Lang's toil has given birth to frightening speed, ambidexterity, and a repertoire of unique rhythmic patterns and timbres that he can employ in a diverse array of musical styles. For a clear example of such, look no further than the sparkling multiple hi-hat work he demonstrates at the top of his DVD.

Speaking about birth and hobbies, of late Thomas has a couple of new voices competing for his leisure time. He and his wife Elizabeth have recently become the proud parents of twins. For his first *MD* cover, we started at the Lang crib, located in London.

Andrew Lepley

Andrew Lepley

Andrew Lepley



Andrew Lepley

MD: Don't take this the wrong way, but a guy with your incredible facility might have gone for triplets instead of twins!

Thomas: [laughs] I thought doubles were enough—*good* doubles! Both boys are healthy, even though they were a month early. They are healthy, happy, and growing—and they're champions at pooping.

This current road trip [world clinic tour] is the first extensive one I've had since the birth. We all have to adjust to the new situation. The children will have to live their lives with us and adjust, just as we do. We're not intending to live babies' lives from now on: They will travel with us and have the same experiences we do.

MD: I would think you're currently the hottest clinician out there.

Thomas: It's the first time I've been told that! We're doing a massive promotional tour as a result of tight-knit collaborations between various sponsors and Hudson Music to promote the DVD, and I'm flattered. I know that it appears I'm hot property on the clinic market. I personally don't want to look at it that way. It's a very small part of what I do, and it's not the most important part to me of "my job."

MD: You made it clear in our last interview that you didn't want to be construed as a "clinic star."

Thomas: My work is in the music industry and not the clinic circuit. It's flattering and

Rick Malkin

Rick Malkin

Andrew Lepley

Andrew Lepley

Andrew Lepley

it strokes my ego as a drummer, and I have a great time talking to all these drummers. But from a musical point of view, I can't take it that seriously.

MD: It strikes me as curious that, given you've got such a tightly planned, strict methodology, you didn't plan out this new portion of your life as well.

Thomas: No, I didn't develop any of this to end up on the clinic circuit; it was a very personal approach that just became very *public*. It was a necessity to create a concept and method of practice that enabled me to develop efficiently and save a lot of time. Hopefully the method and concepts I've developed over the years will help someone else as well. So far, the reaction has been great. I get a lot of correspondence through my Web site, www.sticktrix.com, and people approach me at clinics saying that I've helped them. So I'm pleased.

MD: With the rigors of your schedule, do you still find time to practice? Or is practice simply playing?

Thomas: There's absolutely no time. Between clinics, I'm touring with artists, recording, and producing artists. I try and spend as much time as I can on the road practicing and developing new ideas, even if it's just mental preparation. But I do miss having time to practice. Thank God, though, I've found a way to make it happen for me on the road with the new Remo practice kit—shameless product plug here. But it not only helps me stay in shape in hotel rooms, it enables me to come up with new ideas and practice concepts for myself.

MD: In my opinion, the coolest feature of the Remo Thomas Lang practice kit is the music stand that can be used as a reflector so you can see yourself while practicing.

Thomas: Absolutely. I grew up with that kind of constant self-observation, and I believe it's important to bring that into a practice routine on the drums. It really helps to observe what you do in a mirror. It's an essential part of drumming: If it looks tight or tense, it's going to sound tight or tense.

MD: These days, when you look into the mirror, what sort of things do you look for? For example, how about in terms of your hands?

Thomas: I pay most attention to my wrists, making sure they're always completely straight. When I play Moeller strokes, I pay a lot of attention to my left-hand wrist position. When I play Gladstone technique, I make sure that my left hand—always the tricky part when you play traditional grip—has the right angle in the wrist. It's mainly the wrist that I check on.

Also, when I play "locked grip" on powerful stuff, I check that my right hand is completely straight: I move this one hand position around the drums and pay particular attention not to bend my wrist and cause any tension.

Lang's Delight

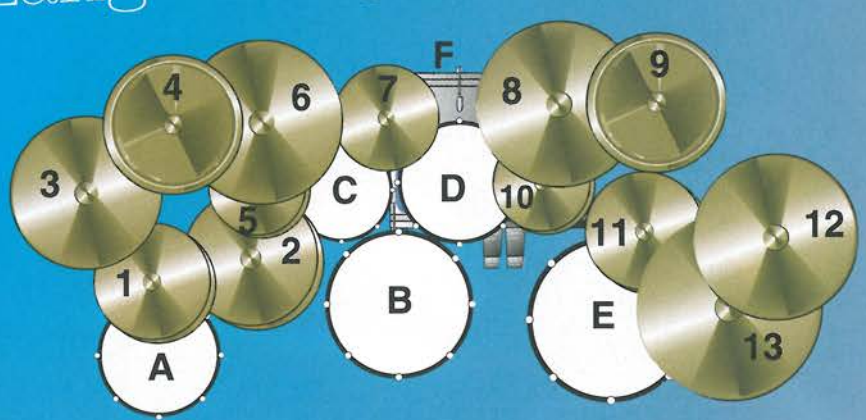
Drums: Sonor Delite kit in brilliant champagne finish

- **A.** 4x12 snare drum
- **B.** 6x14 snare drum
- **C.** 8x10 rack tom
- **D.** 9x12 rack tom
- **E.** 16x16 floor tom
- **F.** 17x22 kick drum

(Some optional drums that Thomas sometimes uses includes a 2x10 Jungle snare played with his left foot by a pedal, a "regular" 2x10 Jungle snare, and 4x10 soprano snare)

Cymbals: Meinl

1. 12" Generation X Alien hi-hats
2. 14" Byzance Dark hi-hats
3. 16" Generation X Synthetik crash (Tom's Becken series)
4. 14" Generation X Filter China (Tom's Becken series)
5. 8" hi-hat (Amun splash top, Classics Medium Bell bottom)
6. 17" Generation X Kompressor crash (Tom's Becken series)
7. 10" Byzance splash
8. 18" Generation X Kinetik crash (Tom's Becken series)
9. 14" Generation X Filter China (Tom's Becken series)
10. 8" hi-hat (Amun splash top, Classics Powerful Bell bottom)
11. 13" Byzance Dark hi-hats
12. 18" Generation X Signal crash/Club ride (Tom's Becken series)
13. 20" Byzance Ping ride



Hardware: Sonor 600 series

Pedals: Sonor 600 series (from left to right on kit): Chain-drive single pedal with felt beater attached to Jungle snare, strap-drive Twin Effect pedal with plastic beaters attached to Meinl MPE1 percussion block (on Meinl pedal mount), left hi-hat (main), left bass drum pedal (slave), right bass drum double pedal (chain-drive double pedal with felt beaters), right hi-hat pedal

Heads: Remo CS Dot on snare batter, Diplomat snare-side, coated Emperor on 12" snare, coated Ambassador on 10" snares, clear Emperors on tom batters, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, PowerStroke 3 on kick drum batter, Ebony Ambassador on front

Sticks: Vic Firth Thomas Lang signature model in white lacquer finish (hickory with wood tip)

Cases: Hardcase

Electronics: Roland TD-20, TD-10, SPDS pad

Andrew Lepley

Thomas On Track

Recordings

Artist	Album
Thomas Lang	Mediator
Thomas Lang	Creative Control (DVD)
Thomas Lang	Ultimatives Schlagzeug (DVD)
Save The Robots	CSX
Save The Robots	1994
Falco	Verdammt Wir Leben Noch
John Wetton	Live In Tokyo
John Wetton	Live In Argentina

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Sandy Nelson	Let There Be Drums	Sandy Nelson
The Beatles	Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band	Ringo Starr
AC/DC	Back In Black	Phil Rudd
Miles Davis	Round About Midnight	Philly Joe Jones
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin	John Bonham
The Police	Regatta De Blanc	Stewart Copeland
Deep Purple	Made In Japan	Ian Paice
Weather Report	Heavy Weather	Alex Acuña
U.K.	Live	Terry Bozzio
Billy Cobham	Spectrum	Billy Cobham
Pink Floyd	Wish You Were Here	Nick Mason

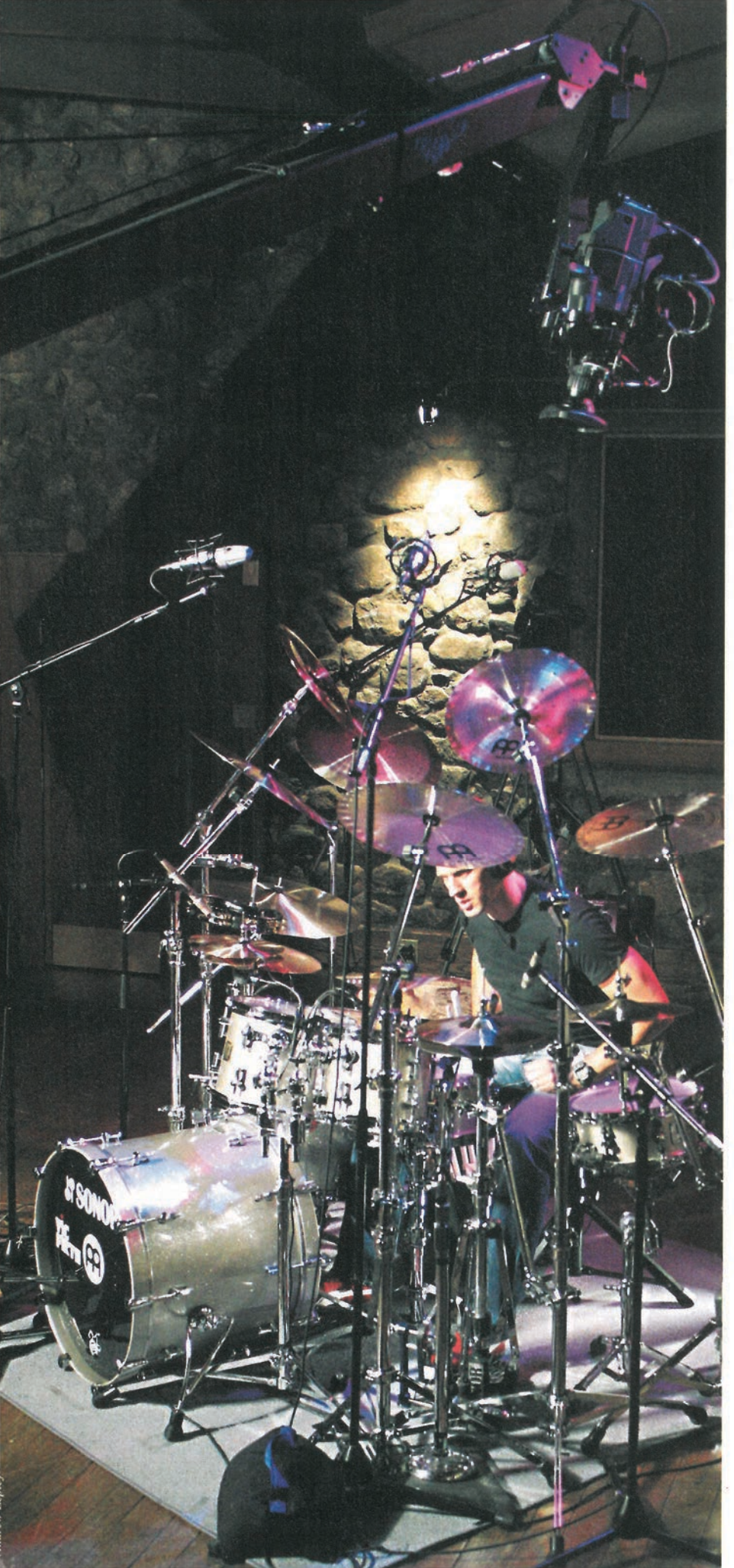
"Technique has *nothing* to do with music. It's a tool, like a hammer: You can build a shed or you can build the Sistine Chapel."

MD: I noticed on the DVD that your right hand often seems to adopt a sort of French Grip, thumbs-up approach. I was surprised because I remember you playing palm-down live.

Thomas: I use three different positions: First, a locked grip, with the palm facing down for the right hand, so that all the action comes from the wrist moving up and down. The fulcrum is my thumb and index finger. I'm always in touch with the wood of the stick; my right hand doesn't open up at all. That's the grip I use for powerful straight-four drumming—big sound, heavy playing, and also occasional fast stuff around the drums or cross-sticking.

Then there's another position with my right hand, which is finger control, what you would call French Grip—more of a thumbs-up position. I open my fingers and my hand to allow the stick to have a bigger radius of motion, if you like. If I didn't open my fingers and kept a locked grip with my thumb up, then I would have minimal radius of motion just by moving my wrist up and down. To compensate for that lack of motion, I open my fingers. That allows the stick to fall further back, and it gives me a little more leverage and power using finger control.

I use that grip for more intricate stuff on the drums, for lighter and faster playing of long strings of notes without accents. You can play a string of 16th notes with your thumb up, but to accent you have to incorporate the wrist or a bit of the forearm. With a Gladstone technique you'd have to use your wrist or forearm to get an accent, or perhaps some whipping motion. I'm sure anybody who has tried that on a pad, drum, or cymbal knows that once you're playing a continuous string of notes, either with palm



down or thumb up, there's no way you can make one stroke louder without making the next stroke or the previous note stronger. You have to use the wrist. With my thumb-up technique, as soon as I have to do accents, I employ Moeller technique.

The third grip would be the Gladstone Technique, which involves the Moeller stroke—that whipping motion from shoulder to forearm—transferred into very small groups of muscles in my hand, into my thumb and index finger. It's sort of a push-and-pull motion of my right hand, and my left hand as well, although with a very different technique with the left because it's a very different grip. It's the principle of Moeller strokes on a very small scale played with just my fingers—my thumb and index finger particularly—for delicate or fast playing.

MD: When you mention the thumb and index finger with your right hand, palm-down grip, what role is the *second* finger playing? I'm thinking of the Steve Smith/Dave Weckl approach to this.

Thomas: *All* of my fingers are equally important. A lot of drummers make the mistake of letting go of the stick, usually with the little finger or ring finger, and do the old ladies' tea cup thing....

MD: Extending the little finger outwards.

Thomas: Exactly. They hold the stick only with their thumb and first finger and maybe the middle finger as well, but the ring finger and little finger are sticking up randomly. I think it's absolutely essential to touch the stick with all fingers and never let go, especially since the further you're away from the fulcrum, the more leverage you have. The little finger is the finger furthest away from the fulcrum, and the further away you go from the fulcrum, the more leverage you have on the stick.

In most cases, the little finger is a weak finger, yet it's essential for the power of the stroke. I keep the fingers touching the stick, and it's a more powerful, firm grip because of that. A lot of contemporary drumming requires this firm grip: You hit the drum hard and from various angles, speeds, and dynamic levels. You need all fingers touching for the downward or upward motion. I play cymbals frequently using a downward and upward motion [from underneath], and it's essential to have a firm grip for this.

MD: Within drumming pedagogy, there's

this eternal argument in which some claim that there is only a down stroke, while others claim there's a down stroke plus an upstroke. Where do you stand?

Thomas: I think that it depends on the technique. In the Gladstone Technique, the upstroke is a side effect of the down stroke because you work a lot with rebounds. It's a continuous motion that you start and perpetuate, throw the stick down and pick it up again. The Gladstone Technique doesn't work for anything but light playing—jazz and classical maybe. For heavy music, the upstroke is as important as the down stroke, especially since a lot of the strokes are really powerful, almost muffled strokes.

You might stop the stick on the drum on the snare drum, maybe on a backbeat. You don't want the stick to instantly rebound; you want all the energy to be thrown into the drum. You must lift that stick up again, which, in many cases, is quite a heavy stick, so it takes a lot of energy to lift it—usually in situations where you don't have much time. That's where it's important to have an accurate, controlled motion following the down stroke; the upstrokes become as important as the down strokes.

MD: One of the things I found sadly missing from your DVD is this sort of frank explanation of grip.

Thomas: There's a reason I didn't cover the grip. I had released two videos in Europe some time before covering all those things—stick height, grip, seat position, and even breathing. Hudson is re-releasing those videos.

Master Of Meter And Dynamics

MD: One of the things we do see in your DVD is, despite the fact that you have incredible control and can generate great volume, your "baseline" is not extremely loud. I wouldn't call you a loud drummer.

Thomas: If the situation demands hardcore drumming and a lot of noise, I can generate that. Dynamics are very important to me, because that's all we have to work with on drums; there's no harmonic or melodic component on drumset. You can only express yourself through rhythms and dynamics.

In the DVD, where I play along with songs, I do like to work at a medium level, with room to go down to nothing. On the other hand, many drummers never go

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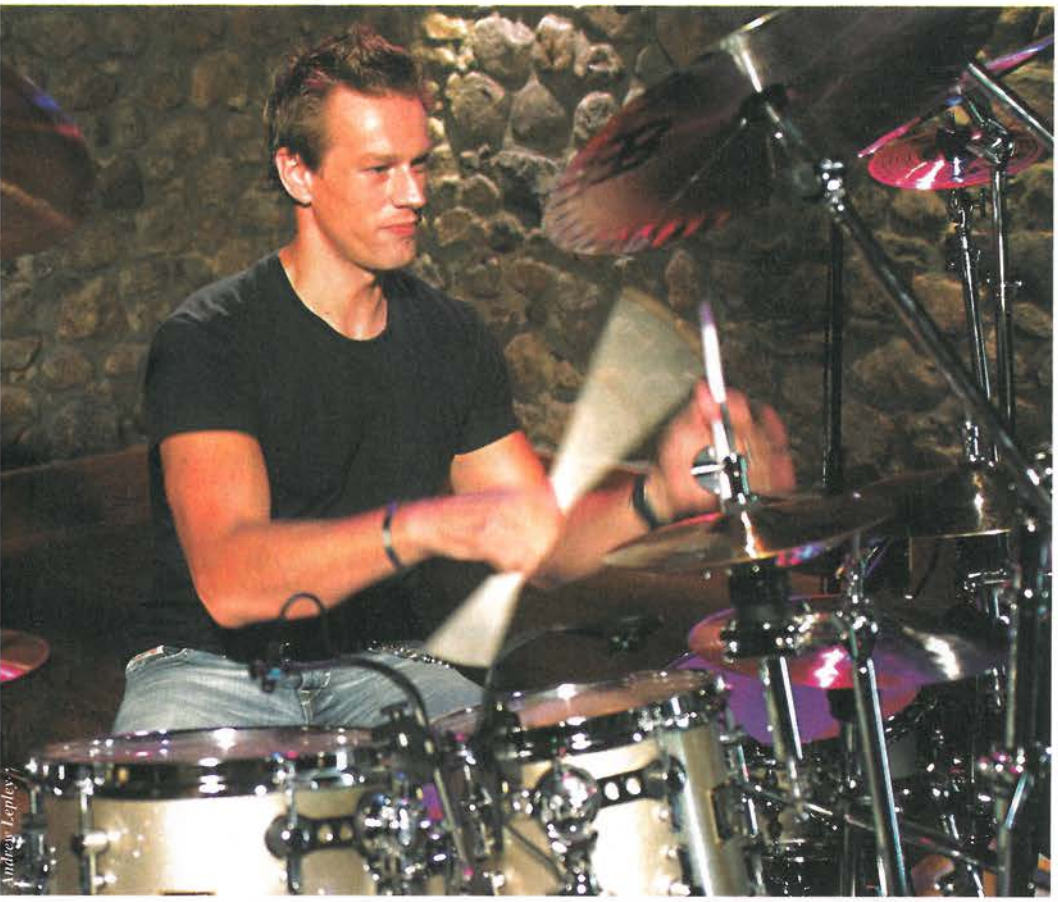
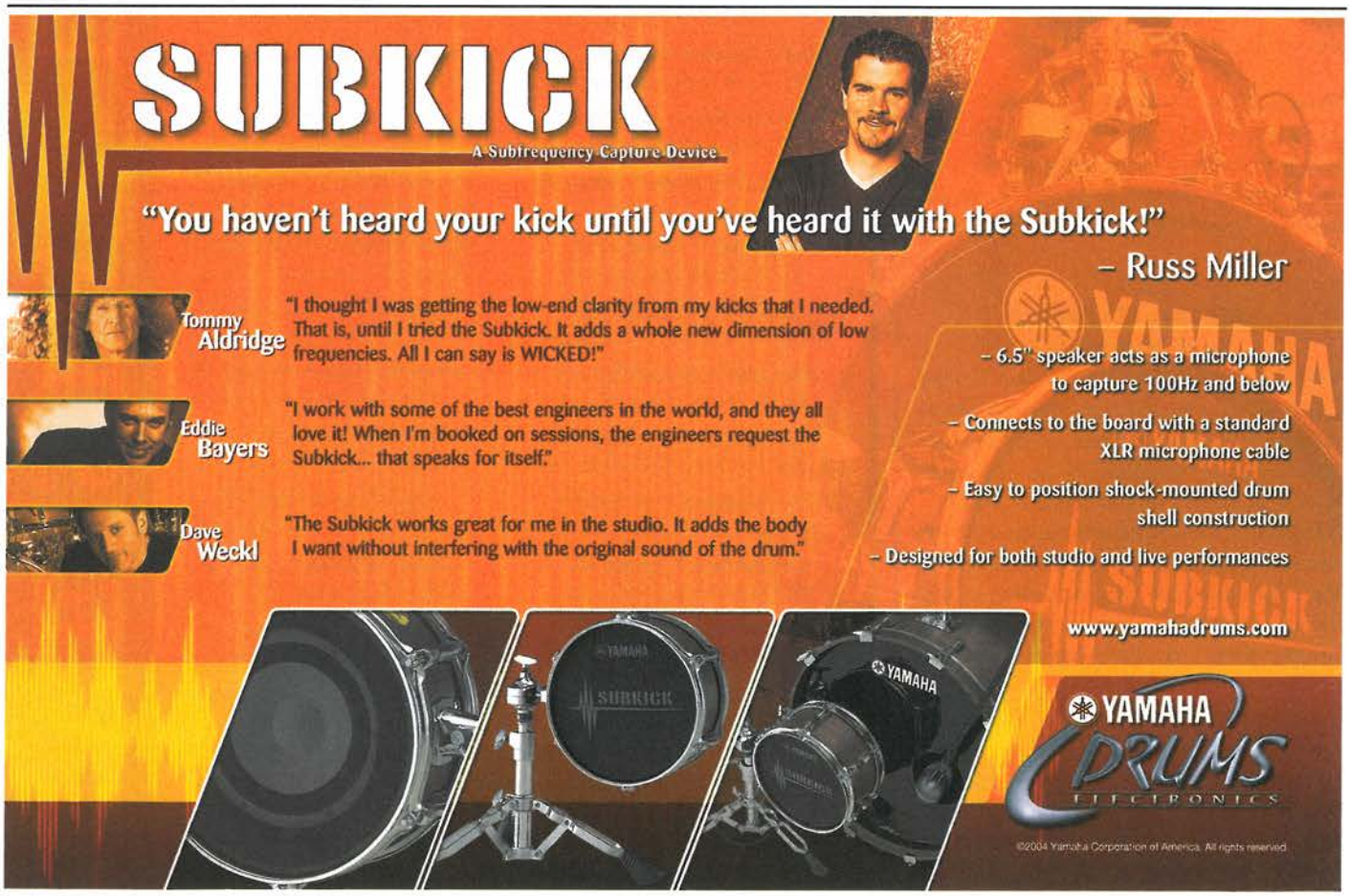

Andrew Lepley

beyond *fortissimo* on the drumset. They cover dynamics from pianissimo to this kind of medium volume, so I do like to explore playing the drums loudly. *I* don't think I'm a quiet drummer. I may *look* like a quiet drummer, but I'm usually told I'm a very loud drummer.

MD: This is a daunting instructional DVD. What time frame would you suggest to people wishing to work through it?

Thomas: I think...months... maybe years. I think people should take a few days and watch it all the way through; get a general impression. Work on specific exercises: These things take a long time to develop properly.

With the DVD, I tried to inspire new ideas—new approaches to a standard instrument. The kit I'm playing is basically a five-piece set with a second snare drum and a bunch of cymbals and several hihats. It's not a huge setup. I'm also using Sonor's Twin Effect pedal, which is a new piece of equipment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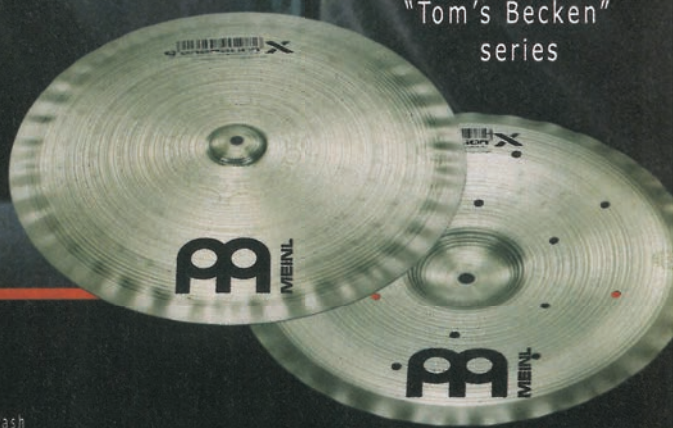
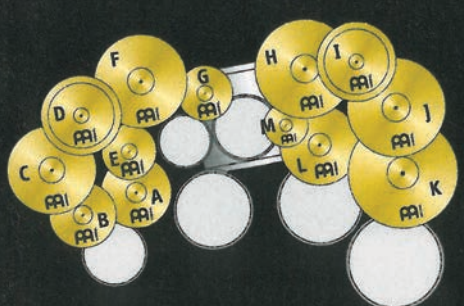


THOMAS LANG



Thomas' Setup:

A) 14" Byzance Dark Hihat
B) 12" Generation X Hihat
C) 16" Generation X Synthetik Crash
D) 14" Generation X Filter China
E) 8" Classics Medium Bell (Bottom) with 8" Amun Splash (Top)
F) 17" Generation X Kompressor Crash
G) 10" Byzance Splash
H) 18" Generation X Kinetik Crash
I) 14" Generation X Filter China
J) 18" Generation X Signal Crash/Klub Ride
K) 20" Byzance Ping Ride
L) 13" Byzance Dark Hihat
M) 8" Classics Medium Bell (Bottom) with 8" Amun Splash (Top)

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that requires new techniques and skills but is readily available and not a huge investment. But basically I tried to inspire new approaches to an old instrument.

MD: Case in point is your use of the multiple mini hi-hats, on which you produce those delightful bursts of open and closed patterns.

Thomas: The first thing that might strike people as unusual is that I play two regular hi-hats, one with my left foot and one with my right foot. That idea came up because ambidexterity is important to playing the drumset. When I started playing the drums, my teacher told me to lead with my right, then with my left, and play ride patterns with both hands. It was logical to do that with my feet.

At one point, I created a setup that had two hi-hats, one for each foot, and a double bass drum pedal. That helped develop that multi X-hat idea. It might sound a little complicated, but I built a setup that can be played in an ambidextrous way. I can play closed hi-hat with my left hand while I'm playing open hats with my right foot *or* my left foot—or I can play closed hi-hat sounds with my right hand while I'm playing open/closed hats with my right or left foot.

That's how I approached the setup *technically*. A lot of the musical ideas came about over the years when I was recording with bands. When touring, I would be asked to reproduce sounds live that were programmed on the record. When you listen to programmed drum parts, producers aren't drummers. They might sit behind the keyboard and play a hi-hat on a keyboard. You have several hi-hats on adjacent keyboard keys: They'd play a closed "tick tick" on the C key, then an open sound on the C sharp key. The D sharp would have a metallic, different-sounding hi-hat sound. They didn't know any better and would play bizarre patterns using three hi-hat sounds. Then everybody would wonder why things didn't sound right when one drummer played these parts live on a single hi-hat. It was simply because the *orchestration* wasn't right. I tried to recreate those orchestrations in a live situation.

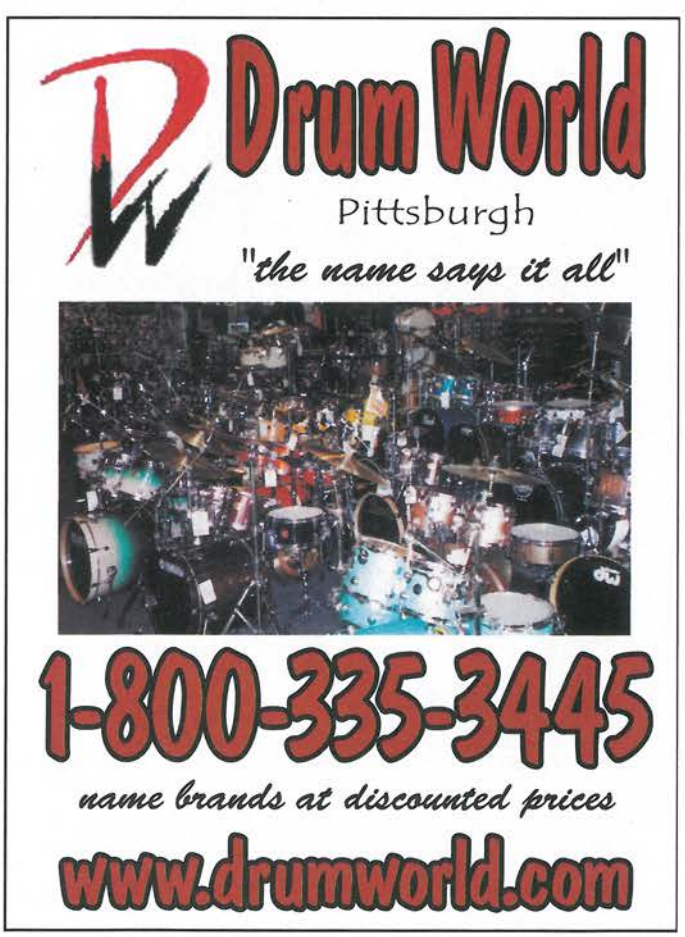
MD: You make a remark on the DVD about overplaying. In that spirit, what's your take on those little boxes that measure how fast drummers play?

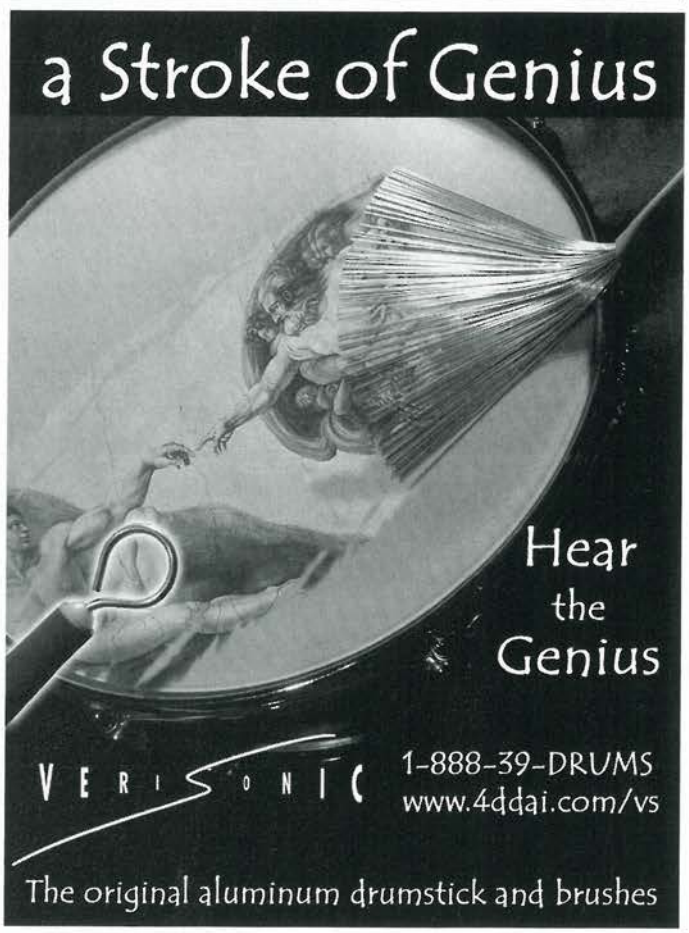
Thomas: I have a firm opinion about this. On one hand, whatever brings people to play the drums or a musical instrument is good. It's a great thing because it causes people to pick up the sticks, or plant their feet firmly on a drum pedal and wail away for hours—you know, be the fastest drummer in the world. Whatever motivates people is a good thing.

On the other hand, it's a completely ridiculous thing. From a musical point of view, I cannot take it seriously, and I think it could mislead young drummers into believing that speed is of any importance in a musical context.

It's important to educate people about the drum roll in the first place: It's to simulate sustain. A trombonist can blow and hold a note for ages; we cannot do that on drums. We hit it and it goes, "pap." We hit it many different times and create a roll to simulate this sustain. To me, the "fastest drummer in the world" thing—people competing to create sustain—is ridiculous! What's next, the three-week-circular-breathing trumpet note? It's good fun to get on a pad and try to get 1,300 notes a minute, but I can't take it seriously musically.

Over the years you realize that it's not all





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about playing fast; it's about playing *slow*, too, and that can be more challenging—and playing quietly. It's about all the extremes of drumming, not just beat and tempo.

MD: Speaking about speed, and also about your choice of alternate timbres, why the choice of Jam Blocks for those bass drum rolls on the DVD?

Thomas: The reason is I needed to translate what I was doing with the Sonor Twin Effect pedal so that it was really in your face, almost annoying. I needed it so people could hear all the attack and intricate things very precisely. The Jam Blocks are so concrete, loud, short, and harsh that everything I play translates really well.

MD: If you were doing a sold-out tour with a British pop idol—no names—would you use the same Jam Block and pedal set up?

Thomas: No, I would use the Twin Effect pedal with electronic sounds—tambourines, shakers, or even bass lines. I only use the Jam Block in an educational setting. The patterns I play in clinics come about because of the patterns I play on tour accompanying artists.

MD: Are you the sort of drummer who will exhaustively research an artist's albums and sounds so that you can come up with identical sounds on stage?

Thomas: Absolutely. That for me is one of the most challenging aspects of my job. When I'm approached by an artist to work in the studio or on tour, and I'm sent CDs for the first time, I really get into what the composer, arranger, and producer were thinking. I analyze the situation. I have telephone conversations with them. Sometimes I get original master tapes and sample the sounds to totally re-create what's on the record. I'll do this even if it means I have to play an intricate percussion part, three different kick sounds, four snare drums—and even if I have to play cymbals with my feet! The goal is to re-create the part and make it feel great.

MD: By the time this article is printed, you'll be close to releasing a solo album. What should readers expect?

Thomas: I'm finishing one of two solo albums I'll be producing this year. I've had a lot of interest in my own weird little musical adventures, through my Web site and at clinics. I've done solo records before. This time I've decided to take my favorite compositions and invite some great musician friends to play on the records. They're very in-your-face "drummy" albums, sometimes as silly as possible, using intricate compositions and a very hardcore drum approach. The first album is called, *Boom, Boom, Boom: That's All I Know*.

MD: Your concept of cymbals is very innovative. Can you explain the logic behind the design of your signature Meinl set, called Tom's Becken?

Thomas: I'd been told for years by fellow musicians, engineers, and producers that in my musical environment my cymbals never sounded right; they always sounded old-fashioned in the context of playing to a programmed groove. I required an acoustic instrument that simulated a sampled sound, and I designed my cymbals with that in mind. If I was playing a modern groove with a sequence, I needed cymbals that blend with programmed electronic sounds. I found that cymbals are generally too loud in the studio or in a miked-up live situation. There's a lot of leakage of cymbals into drum mic's.

I like drum sounds that are big, beefy, drummy, and woody sounding. The cymbals should be part of the fatness, so they

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shouldn't be too loud. My cymbals are made from a special alloy, FX 9, which is composed of four or five different metals, as opposed to B20, which has only two metals and is what most cymbals are made of. The FX 9 represents the same vibratory characteristics as B20, but they're a little quieter—and also more affordable. I play my cymbals very, very hard, and these are perfect. They're never too loud and are easily controlled when you mike them up.

MD: Which "regular" cymbals are generally the prime offenders in the volume department?

Thomas: Crash cymbals, always. A crash cymbal is an idiophone. You hit it and it makes a noise. That's it. It's not a pitch. For noise, I need something I can really whack and create a lot of energy with, but that isn't offensive. I wanted crash cymbals to be blotches of color in a groove but not to cover up everything. And if you set up four of them, they're pitch-matched so you can quickly alternate between them without creating a huge wash.

MD: Singer/songwriters are always complaining about cymbals. Maybe they'd like *yours*.

Thomas: I'm constantly amazed at how versatile they are, even though I designed them for this white-noise, quick-decay aspect. I saw Nick D'Virgilio play at The Baked Potato in LA with them in a fusion-jazz context, and I've seen people play them with top-40 bands with electronic drums on cruise ships and so on. They always sound great.

MD: If you were to recommend one of your signature cymbals for "general" use, which would be your first choice?

Thomas: It would probably be the Kinetic Crash, which doubles as a Club Ride, and also the Kompressor Crash. It's available as an 18" and 17" cymbal [crash-ride and crash, respectively]. These would work especially well in contemporary jazz. If you buy them in pre-packs, you get a free China in each pack. The ride also works in jazz or drum 'n' bass. At last year's Montreux Jazz Festival, I saw a drummer use my ride cymbal and it sounded beautiful, played with very light sticks and brushes.

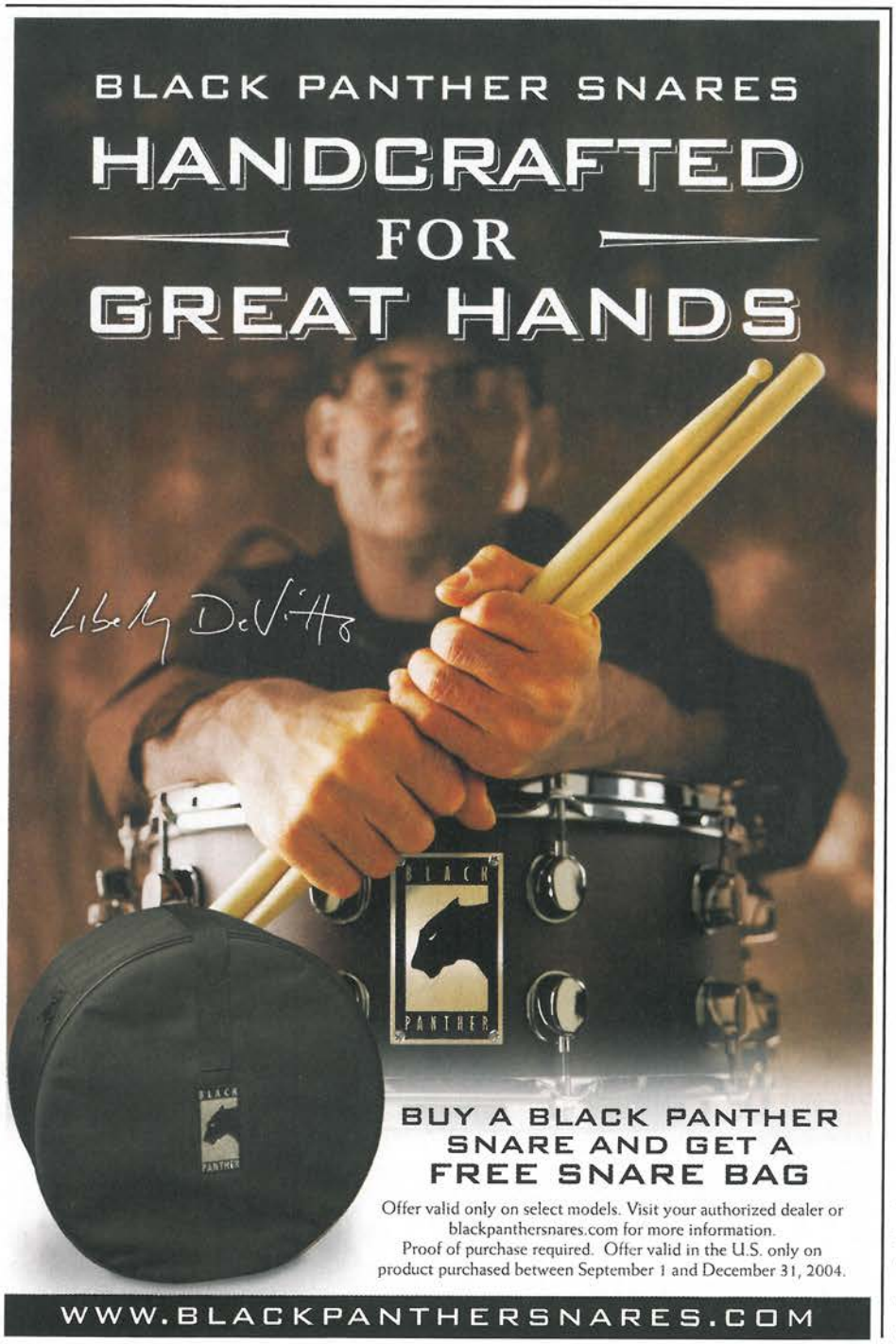
MD: These cymbals have an ambiguous quality that stirs the imagination.

Thomas: They do, and I have to say that, when you hear them by themselves, they sound almost cheap—but that's *exactly* what I wanted. You press the crash cymbal button on a drum computer and you get this sound [imitates short decay, shrill crash sound].

MD: Why all the holes in many of these cymbals?

Thomas: I thought that by taking material away, it made the cymbal lighter without making it thinner. You *could* have made it smaller or thinner, or you could leave it the same thickness and take out material by drilling holes. I wanted the sound to be lighter, airier, and more responsive without affecting the size or thickness of the cymbal.

The cymbals are more robust this way and, interestingly, more flexible, and with the holes, the sound decays quickly. The holes interrupt the vibration and deflect it. They're almost like little "muffles" spread over the cymbal. At first, when I suggested it, they said, "You're crazy," but it worked.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MD: Did any other of your unique ideas come to fruition in these cymbals?

Thomas: Well, for example, I've never seen the soundwave—the sound edges—on a crash cymbal. I've seen them on hi-hats, where it's used to let air escape more efficiently. With a crash cymbal, it makes the cymbal a little faster in response but a little quieter in effect. I experimented with that as well as with the smallest possible bell on quite large cymbals, which gives you less tonality in a cymbal. Again, it's that white noise effect.

Fine, You Say... But Can He Groove?

MD: I'm wondering if you've ever listened to, say, a very funky drummer like Idris Muhammad play quarter notes and thought, "Gee, I wonder if I could do that?" You obviously have the technique to do anything, but the mindset is another thing.

Thomas: You know, it's funny you mention Idris, because he's a friend of mine and lives in Vienna. To be honest, a lot of drummers have the perception that someone who has a lot of technical facility automatically becomes a complicated player. Technique has *nothing* to do with music. Technique is a tool, like a hammer: You can build a shed or you can build the Sistine Chapel.

Having technique means I can concentrate on *what* to play and not *how* to play it. When I play music, I don't think about technique. It's there when I need it, fine. I will never think about anything technical—unless I'm playing for drummers. When I play drum clinics, I play technical stuff. I don't do a drum clinic to show people how great I can groove. The biggest part of why I work is because I can play time and I can immerse myself emotionally in music and interpret what someone else has written or what I have written.

Sometimes I see funny correspondence in various Web site forums. I sneak in there sometimes and find out what people write about me. It's incredible that there's such vehemence behind people's opinion about technical drummers. Anybody who has invested a lot of energy, time, and passion into their instrument—if he or she can execute something very complicated really well—they can also play something super easy really well.

I got into drums to play music. I'm never on an ego trip when I work. I think that's why I *get* work. People like the way I interpret their music. I have a profession, which is being a musician, but I also have a hobby, which is playing the drums. At one point, my hobby became my profession. The hobby side of things has turned public because of clinics, festivals, and the DVD.

Sometimes when I have time, I spend hours behind the drums creating little patterns that I haven't heard before. Some people like toy trains; I like to play "the unplayed" on the drumset. But the next day I have to go to work and show up at the studio and play 2 and 4 for eight hours.

I think it's important to have knowledge of busy playing and not so busy playing, of loud playing and quiet playing, of electronic drumming and drum programming. Today as a session drummer you have to do all of these things. These days if you want to be a working drummer, you'd better get your technique together. People think you

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can work just by having that great, gutsy feel, but it's *not enough*. What about knowing Logic Audio or programming your V-Drums *and* having that gutsy feel?

MD: I had the same discussion with Jim Keltner. He said that we should stop talking about technique in disparaging terms, because technique serves to advance the art of drumming.

Thomas: I love his stuff. Great technique is good; not so great technique is good, too. Whatever combination of elements is just as important as any other, you know?

MD: Did you always feel this way?

Thomas: I never thought much about it until I was approached by so many people saying, "What you do is so *technical*." But I think any professional musician will agree, that the more technique you have, the easier touring will become. A powerful, exhausting show will be easier to play. It will also be easier to insert yourself in bizarre, catastrophic musical circumstances: Technique becomes a safety net: You can just *blow*. But technique is not a pillar of musical expression.

MD: You just brought two boys into the world. Will it be important to play music in the house?

Thomas: Absolutely. We did so during pregnancy and we do now. They calm down whenever we put on music—at home or in the car. They doze off or they start smiling. It's beautiful to see how they respond to it.

MD: Do you have an "implicit play list" of songs you figure kids ought to listen to?

Thomas: Interesting you say that: We've been playing a lot of Carpenters and Elvis for them. Stevie Wonder: I'm a huge fan. Cole Porter, too. The kids are also exposed to all the music I work on, which recently has included some classical and Chinese music, such as guzheng, a two-thousand-year-old, twelve-stringed instrument. The bottom line is, there are no limits to what I listen to or what they should listen to. It's important for them to understand that there is no good or bad music.

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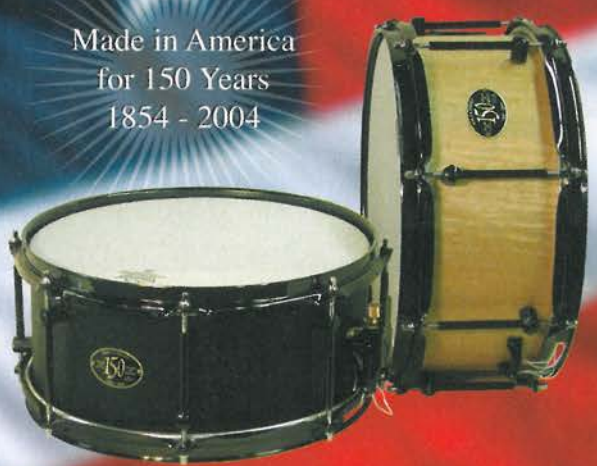

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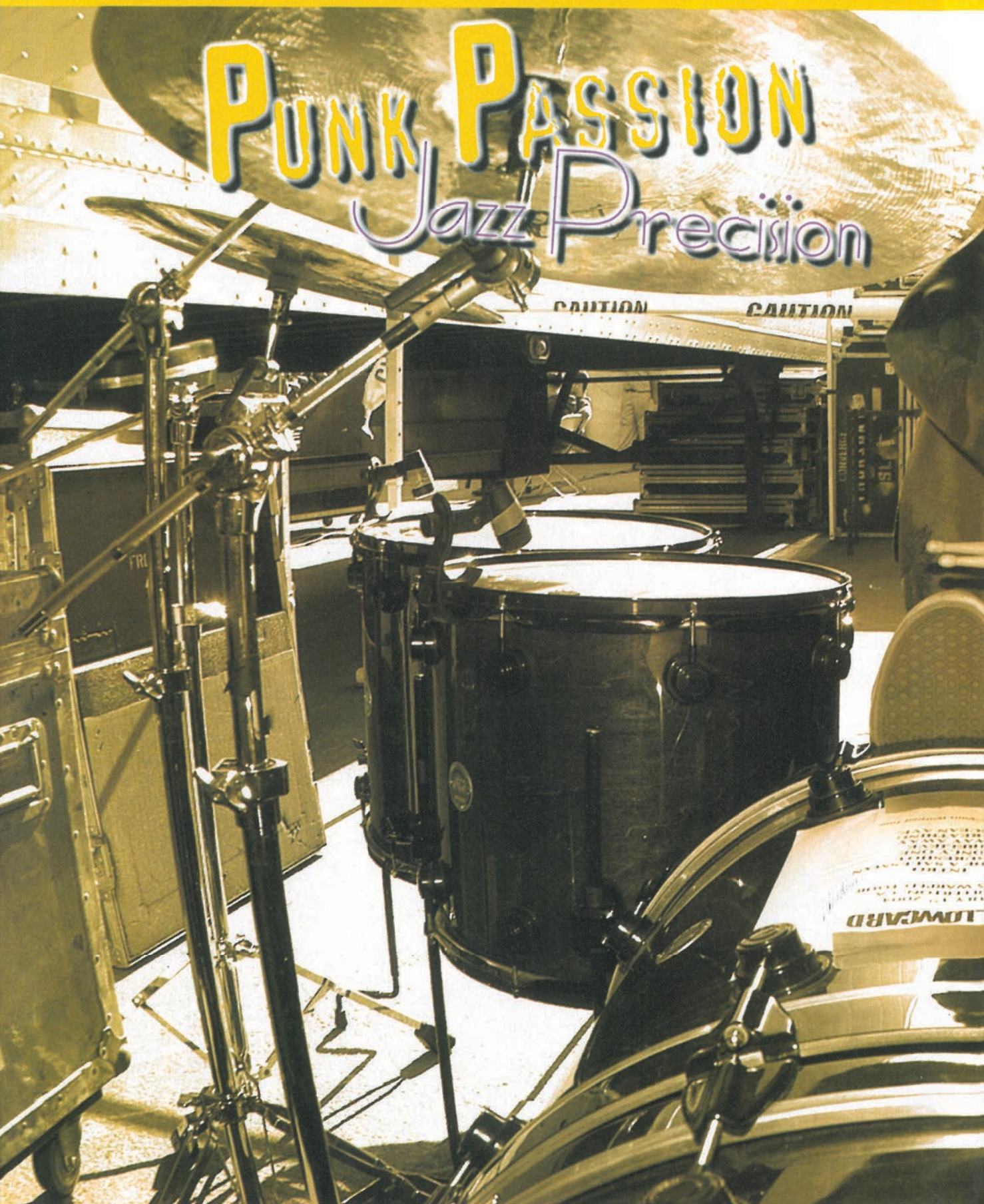

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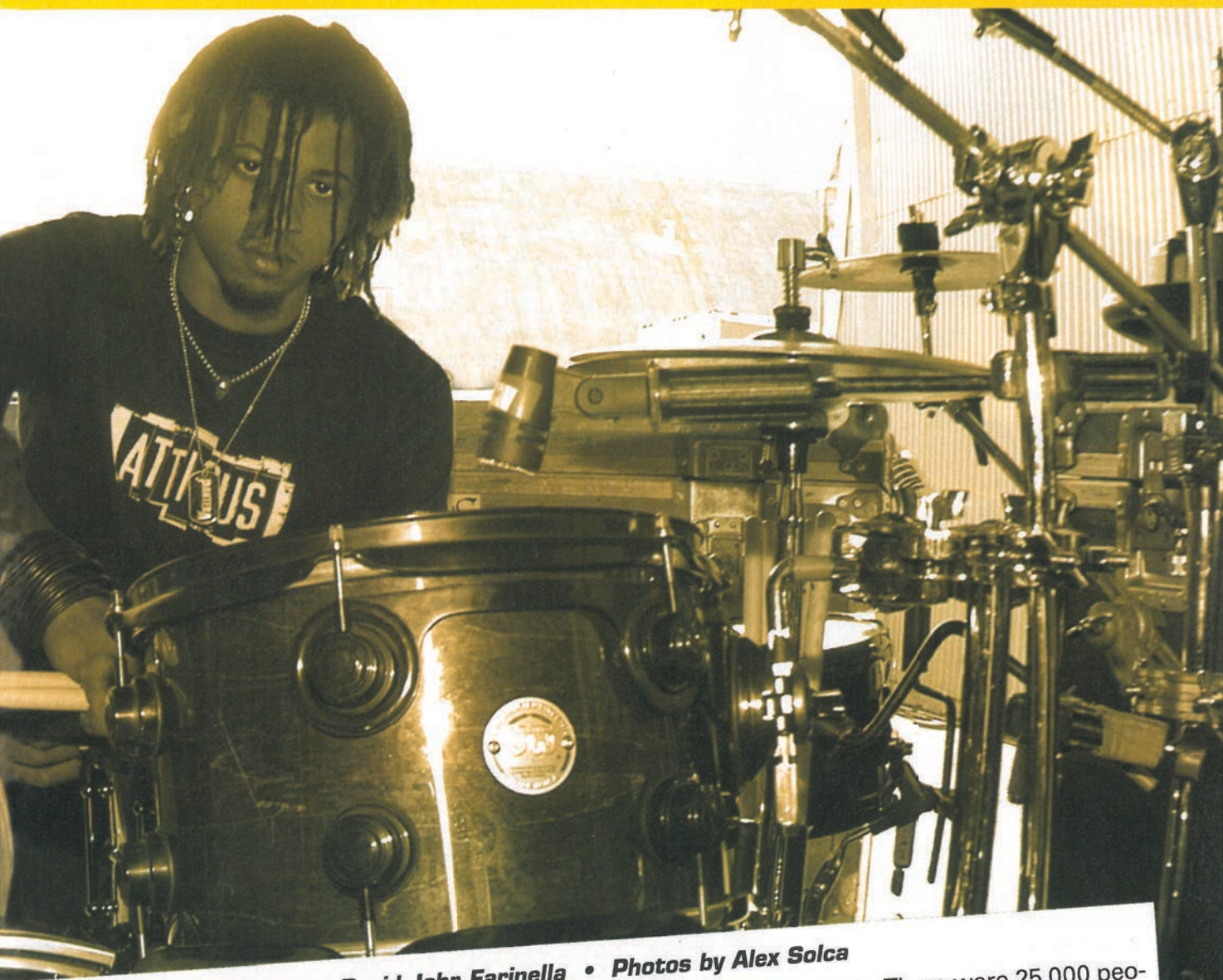

Story by David John Farinella • Photos by Alex Solca

Most sixteen-year-olds are worried about a couple of things—passing a driving test, getting through an algebra exam, maybe even a first (or second or third) crush. But when drummer Longineu Parsons III was sixteen, he was worried about *25,000* different things.

"I was in South America with my father's band, Tribal Disorder," Parsons recalls. "There were ten people in the band, and I was the first to walk out on stage. I looked out and all I could see was a *sea* of people. There were 25,000 people out there. It was the biggest crowd I'd ever played for. I was out of my mind."

Longineu carried that performance with aplomb, just like the hundreds of others he had played in the previous three years across the globe with his father, noted jazz trumpeter Longineu Parsons II. "Working with my dad broke me into the music world pretty well," he reports with a laugh. No kidding.

Given that exposure—and let's face it, pressure—twenty-four-year-old Longineu Parsons III has been well-schooled in the music world. A couple of years after the "sea of people" show, Parsons and four of his friends formed Yellowcard, an emo-punk rock band that has recently scored a platinum disc with their major-label debut, *Ocean Avenue,* behind such hits as "Only One," "Way Away," and the album's title track.

Parsons brings an eclectic drumming and music history into Yellowcard, including jazz and fusion dates with his father's numerous outfits, funk-flavored session dates, and a sheer love for hardcore metal. He sat behind a drumkit for the first time at the age of two, during another of his father's tours. "I was on tour with my dad," he recalls, "and Max Roach was the drummer. So I was walking around the stage one day after they had finished and I just hopped behind Max's kit. My feet didn't reach the pedals, but I started tapping on the drums, trying to figure out what sound each made, instead of just beating on them wildly. But that's what got me started on drums, watching Max Roach and his famous twenty-minute hi-hat solos."

In addition to the global tours, the Parsons family gigged across the country at a variety of small jazz clubs and in a number of studio situations. "We always traveled a lot," Parsons recalls. "We'd go from our home in Florida to Georgia to record with different studio musicians. I was playing professionally when I was thirteen. And it was my father who always told me to head out there, play gigs, and get my feet wet. I think he wanted me to be the musician he thought I could be.

"I did every little gig I could," Parsons continues. "I played little places that sometimes had as few as five people, sometimes less. But I would play for the experience and to get the chance to work with different musicians. Over time I learned how to improv over songs. I built a lot of confidence that way. I'd just show up to a gig without even knowing the musicians, and play all night."

Longineu's Drumkit Specs

Shortly after Yellowcard hit the road in support of their recent release, *Ocean Avenue*, Longineu Parsons scored a DW endorsement. His kit is relatively simple: an 18x24 bass drum with an 8"-deep Woofer in front, a 10x12 rack tom, 14x16 and 16x18 floor toms, a 6x10 soprano snare set to his left (used on the song "Believe"), and an 8x14 brass snare drum.

As for cymbals, Parsons uses Buzin. "They're amazing," he states. "They're the most universal cymbals I've ever played. I have a ride cymbal that works with Yellowcard, but I can turn around and use it on a jazz gig. As for my setup, on my left I have a 10" splash, 14" hi-hats, and 19" and 20" crashes. On my right I have a 24" ride, a 20" crash, and a 22" China."

Parsons also uses DW hardware, Vater sticks, and Remo Pinstripe heads. He also uses in-ear monitors, for a specific reason. "They protect my ears," Parsons simply states. "I mean, as a drummer, the chances are you're going to suffer some hearing loss. With in-ears, hopefully we can prevent some of it."

Besides a lot of gigging experience and the opportunity to see Max Roach play, the youngster listened to what the elder statesman of the drums had to say. In fact, Parsons' quick-paced playing in Yellowcard was influenced by the legendary drummer. "Max had a theory that a drummer should never have more gear than he actually plays, or play more than he needs to," Parsons recalls. "If you go way back in time, like back to the beginning with Buddy Rich, he would use a couple of toms, snare drum, and that little cymbal that came up from the big extended bass drum, and he would *rock* that kit as if he had twenty pieces in front of him. Max would solo on just a hi-hat and make it sound as if he was playing a solo on an entire kit.

"Nowadays you've got these rock drummers who have all these drums," Parsons says, "but they don't know how to play them or don't use every piece. If I go to one of these shows and see a drummer with a lot of drums, I want to see those drums played.

"It boils down to feel over equipment," Parsons adds. "I know that I'm going to use any drum I have on stage, and use it in a unique way. Plus I try not to repeat myself. If you come to hear me on a Monday, on Tuesday I'll be feeling a different way and playing differently. Maybe I'll feel that a song should go in another direction. Maybe I'll feel that the song "Breathing" should be played a little harder, or maybe with more fills. It's all about the mood.

"EVEN THOUGH YELLOWCARD IS A ROCK AND PUNK BAND, I THINK MY JAZZ CHOPS COME INTO PLAY *A LOT*."

"I think music is a very mood-setting thing," Parson continues, "and when I see all those drums, I want to play them. I think drums are there to be played, not just for show. That's why on some songs I may never play a fill, but on others I'll play *many* fills. It's all about the moment and what it feels like. It's all about the feeling."

Bringing all of that thought and experience to Yellowcard has been important to Parsons. "Everything I do is related to the past in some form or fashion," he says. "I grew up playing jazz, and I went on to play a lot of funk and fusion. Yeah, you bet I incorporate a lot of what I learned in the past to what I do now. Definitely. Even though Yellowcard is a rock and punk band, I think my jazz chops come into play *a lot*."

On the flip side, Parsons' metal influence can be felt in the band's intensity. "I hit hard," he reports with a laugh. "I get a

lot of that from listening to metal bands like Pantera and Slipknot. I listen to a lot of hard music. It keeps me pumped."

Parsons does love to dip into his mixed bag of styles. Jazz, rock, funk, metal, classical—you name it, he'll play it. To illustrate the point, the drummer points to the song "Way Away" on the *Ocean Avenue* release. "The bridge on that song was inspired by Max Roach," he explains. "He did this really cool hi-hat roll thing while he was keeping time on the kick and snare. I took that idea and pretty much molded my part around it."

At the same time, on "Way Away" Parsons got to flash the other facets of his playing personality. "The tune goes from a solid rock thing to a sort of fusion bridge, and then we take it to a *harder* side," he laughs. "That song was meant to be played. There's a lot of energy. And while the bridge part I'm playing is subtle, it's not a part to lag on. It has to be *played*."

"Miles Apart" highlights Parsons' jazz roots. "That's actually a big band swing intro," Parsons states. "I got that from lis-

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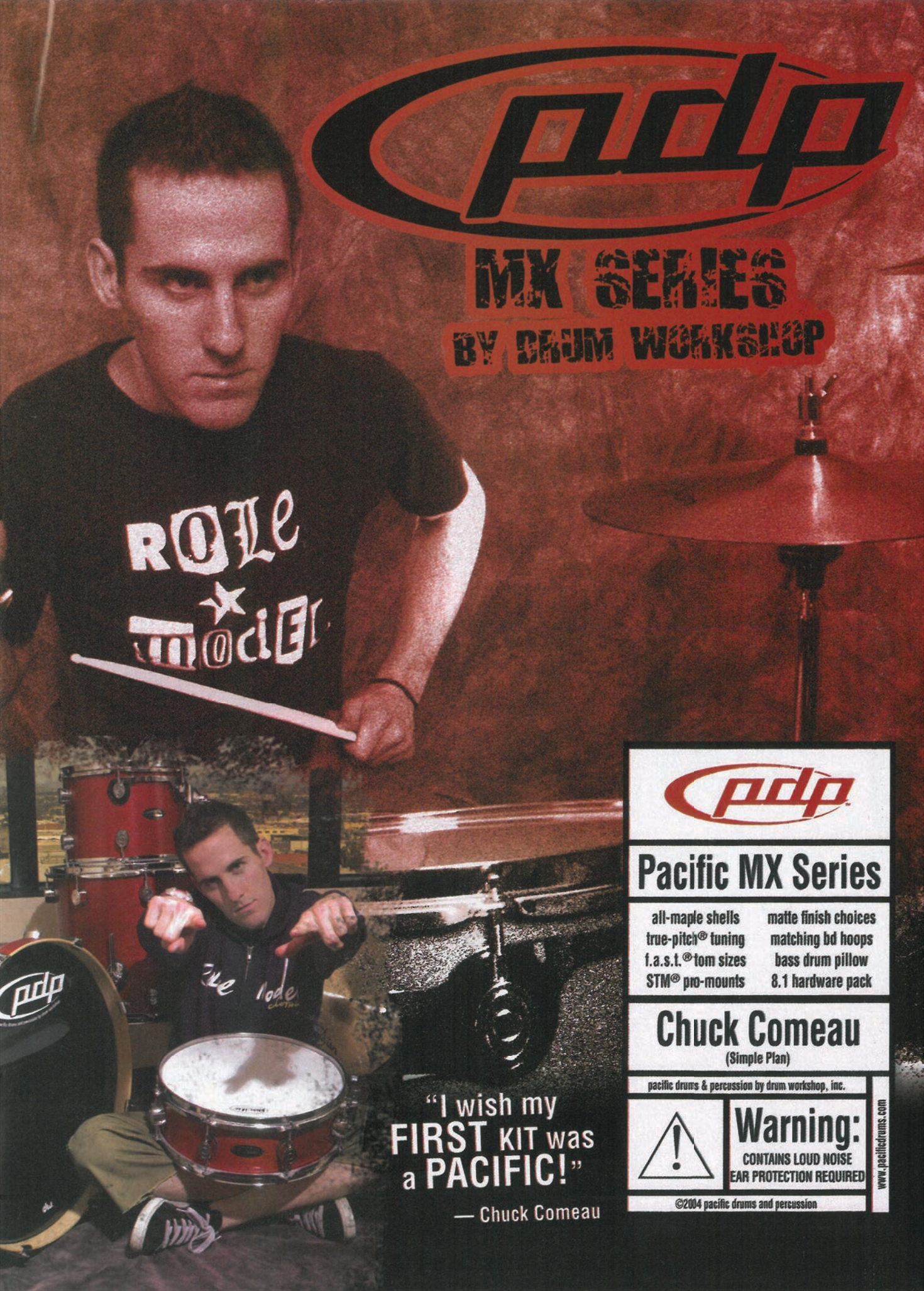
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tening to some old recordings by Elvin Jones. If you listen to the beginning and imagine a jazz song instead of a rock song, you'll hear it."

Mixing and matching feels and approaches seems to be a snap for Parsons. "I try to be fluent in whatever style I play," he says. "You know when you're playing a regular 4/4 groove, and then four bars later you want to change it up and go into a 6/8 thing, and then switch back to 4/4? My jazz, funk, and fusion background helps me do that. I do that sort of thing all the time."

Give Parsons a ballad, though, and things get different. The ballad "Back Home," he says, was one of the more challenging tracks for him to cut on *Ocean Avenue*. "It's such a laid-back tune, and the tempo is so slow," he explains. "I've found that I really like working with a click track, especially on slower songs, where you have to be precise but still want to leave space. You have to be a little more aware with slower songs, because you don't want to play too much."

The key to "Back Home" was to stay true to the song. "I wanted to make it swing," Parsons admits, "but not do too much, because the song doesn't call for it. In fact, the song didn't call for *anything*. It just needed a backbeat, because the focus is on the lead vocals and the harmonies behind them."

More than blending his sometimes disparate influences, Parsons is keeping up with a band—singer/guitarist Ryan Key, singer/violinist Sean Mackin, guitarist Ben Harper, and bassist Pete Mosely—that excels in musicianship. They all trained at the Douglas Anderson School Of The Arts in Jacksonville, Florida. "We're all serious musicians," Parsons states. "Ryan plays piano, bass, and guitar, and sings. I play piano, bass, and guitar as well as percussion and drums. We're all multi-instrumentalists, and we've all learned about music composition." In fact, Parsons says that there are times when he'll chart out his own drum parts. "Sometimes we'll be in the rehearsal room," he reveals, "and if I hear something in my head that I want to remember, I'll just jot it down."

Even though Parsons is an expert reader and can play many styles, he's always working on ways to improve on the drums. In his early days, he spent a lot of time working on his double pedal chops, and he used them on many gigs. More recently, Parsons ditched the double pedal, preferring to develop his single-bass, right-foot chops to a high degree. In fact, you can hear bits of his impressive bass drum technique on Yellowcard's CD.

Parsons admits, though, that he did have to spend some time practicing. "I focused on that one foot," he says. "I tried to duplicate everything I played with a double pedal with one foot. It was a challenge at first, but it did come together. Eventually I also realized that it isn't about how many hits you play, it's about how consistent and solid you can keep your foot. I spent a lot of time just practicing quarter notes over and over again to make it absolutely solid. I didn't change it up or play any doubles or anything. Once I had that solid foundation, I started working on double strokes and eventually triplets. After that I started taking it even further.

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drum foot," Parsons says, "practice very slowly and keep it slow. The slower you do it, the more control you develop. Then, when you begin to build up the speed, you have a solid foundation. Once you have that foundation, you can really begin to take it up."

Yellowcard wrote much of the music on *Ocean Avenue* as a band, putting it together after jamming on ideas in a rented mountain house. But the key to a successful session, Parsons says, is to come in with an open mind. "It's kind of funny, because when we're writing a particular song, I don't think of it as a rock song," he explains. "I'll leave it open, and I think that's when my influences come into play, when I can just expand on the ideas. If you label something right away, you're going to play it that way and not take it somewhere different."

During the recording sessions for *Ocean Avenue,* Parsons played a Pork Pie kit, a collection of Buzin cymbals, and up to ten different snare drums. Some of the snare drums included a couple of Ludwig Black Beauties, a Slingerland, a Pearl Master Series, and a few DWs. Parsons also used a Pearl Chad Smith model snare that he calls "old faithful."

Parsons maintains a practice schedule while on the road by keeping up with his reading of drum magazines. (He says he's been a *Modern Drummer* reader since the age of fifteen.) He also watches instructional DVDs, including a couple of recent Buddy Rich releases. Parsons also likes to practice on a pad. "I have a pair of RealFeel pads that I practice on with marching sticks," the drummer says. "I practice a lot of single-stroke and double-stroke rolls, as well as a lot of triplets. I also warm up on a pad about an hour or so before a show. I have to make sure that I warm up my left wrist, because it's my snare hand and it's a little weaker than my right."

Then, just about an hour before the band is set to hit the stage, Parsons will head to his kit to check its readiness. "I'll start tweaking them out," he says, "making sure they're ready for me. Even though I have some of the best people setting up my gear, I still check the kit. Plus I like to wipe it down with a cloth and make sure the hardware is shiny. I'm *so* like that. My drums are like my kids." That time also enables him to "get right" behind the kit. "It gets me in motion being behind the kit itself," he shares. "I think that's really important."

Parsons' passion for the drums is striking, especially considering his multi-instrumental talents. "One of the main things I like about drumming is that every little thing you do is heard," he says. "I like that you have to be precise with it. It's such a precise instrument, but at the same time you can take that precision, turn it around, and make jambalaya, and then make it precise again. You're the most heard instrument of all, much more than the guitars. You're what people are hearing and dancing to. I *enjoy* being heard."

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LOS LONELY BOYS'

RINGO GARZA

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Story by Robyn Flans
Photos by Carlos San Miguel

The Garza brothers—a.k.a. Los Lonely Boys—still can't believe that their father had the foresight to name his youngest son Ringo. Yes, that's his real name, his given name (unlike the "other" Ringo, whose birth name was Richard Starkey). Yes, it's a weird coincidence, but Ringo Garza is a drummer, a *happening* drummer.

fibes

"He's a really good player," says Ringo's brother Jojo, the bassist in Los Lonely Boys. "He's a really strong backbone drummer, and he has his little chops that he likes to throw in. Ringo wails on the drums like there's no tomorrow. He's a monster. It's amazing his drums don't collapse, the way he hits them. And Ringo makes me smile up on stage."

"He's a drumstick-breakin', hard-hittin' Texican who *beats* the drums," adds brother Henry, who is the guitarist in the group. "After every show, I go back to where he was playing and it looks like a dang beaver went to town. There are wood chips everywhere. Drumming is in Ringo's blood."

According to *Rolling Stone*, the young Texican rock 'n' roll trio—Henry, twenty-six, Jojo, twenty-four, and Ringo, twenty-two—is "the surprise success of 2004." Their self-titled debut album even features fan Willie Nelson on the track "La Contestacion." And Carlos Santana loved the album so much that he made it his business to go out and jam with them when they performed in San Francisco recently. Released in the summer of 2003, *Los Lonely Boys* broke into the top-10 of the *Billboard* album chart in June of this year, an accomplishment these three brothers only dreamed of as kids growing up in Texas.

Musical instruments were present in the Garza household, thanks to the trio's father, Enrique, who was also a musician who led his own bands. He turned the youngsters on to such country artists as Ronnie Milsap, Willie Nelson, and Waylon Jennings. Dad also played such classics as Chuck Berry, Richie Valens, and The Beatles for the aspiring musicians.

"Music isn't just a way to make money. It's a way of life for us."

It was no surprise when Henry and Jojo began jamming together at an early age—Henry on guitar and, at the time, Jojo on drums. Ringo recalls as a five-year-old, before he even touched the

drums, having a dream about his uncle who had played drums with his father's band. His uncle had passed away by that time, but in the dream he told Ringo *he* would be a drummer.

A short time later, after their dad and mom divorced and Jojo went to stay with his dad, that Henry gave his little brother Ringo his one and only drum lesson. According to Ringo, "Fifteen minutes later, I was playing. Henry picked up his guitar and we started jamming. Then, when Jojo came back from Amarillo, he began playing with us on bass." And eventually all three began playing with their father.

"Our dad opened the cage and said, 'The sky's the limit,'" Ringo says. And Los Lonely Boys was born.

• • • • • •

MD: After that initial lesson you got from your brother Henry, how did you

really learn to play the drums?

Ringo: I was around music and musicians all the time. I watched and listened, and then I'd go home and try out what I'd heard on my drumset. I saw a John Bonham video when I was younger, and his drum solo changed my life. It made me want to play better. And just seeing local bands play in clubs was a great learning experience.

It seems I've always loved playing the drums, and I still do—it's my life. Coming up, I just wanted to learn and teach myself. I don't know rudiments. Well, I do know the basics, but I was never taught the rudiments. They just came out of listening and watching.

MD: Did you have any formal lessons or play in music groups at school?

Ringo: No, no, no. I never did it at school or had lessons. The only time somebody taught me was on that first day with Henry. He taught me a basic beat: the kick on 1 and snare on the 3 with the hands playing in between on the hi-hat. After Henry showed me that, we started jamming every day. Music isn't just a way to make money. It's a way of life for us.

MD: At what age were you actually making a living at it?

Ringo: I started making money playing drums when I was seven. We played any club, bar, cantina, birthday party—you name it, anywhere they would have us.

MD: I understand that your first influence was country music. What did you listen to after that?

Ringo: Stevie Ray Vaughan, with Chris Layton on drums. Man! That Texas shuffle he does and that snare work he plays is a real inspiration. I also listened to The Dave Matthews Band with Carter Beauford on drums. And, of course, John Bonham. We also listened to The Beatles, The Everly Brothers, and Richie Valens quite a bit.

MD: When did you guys start writing music?

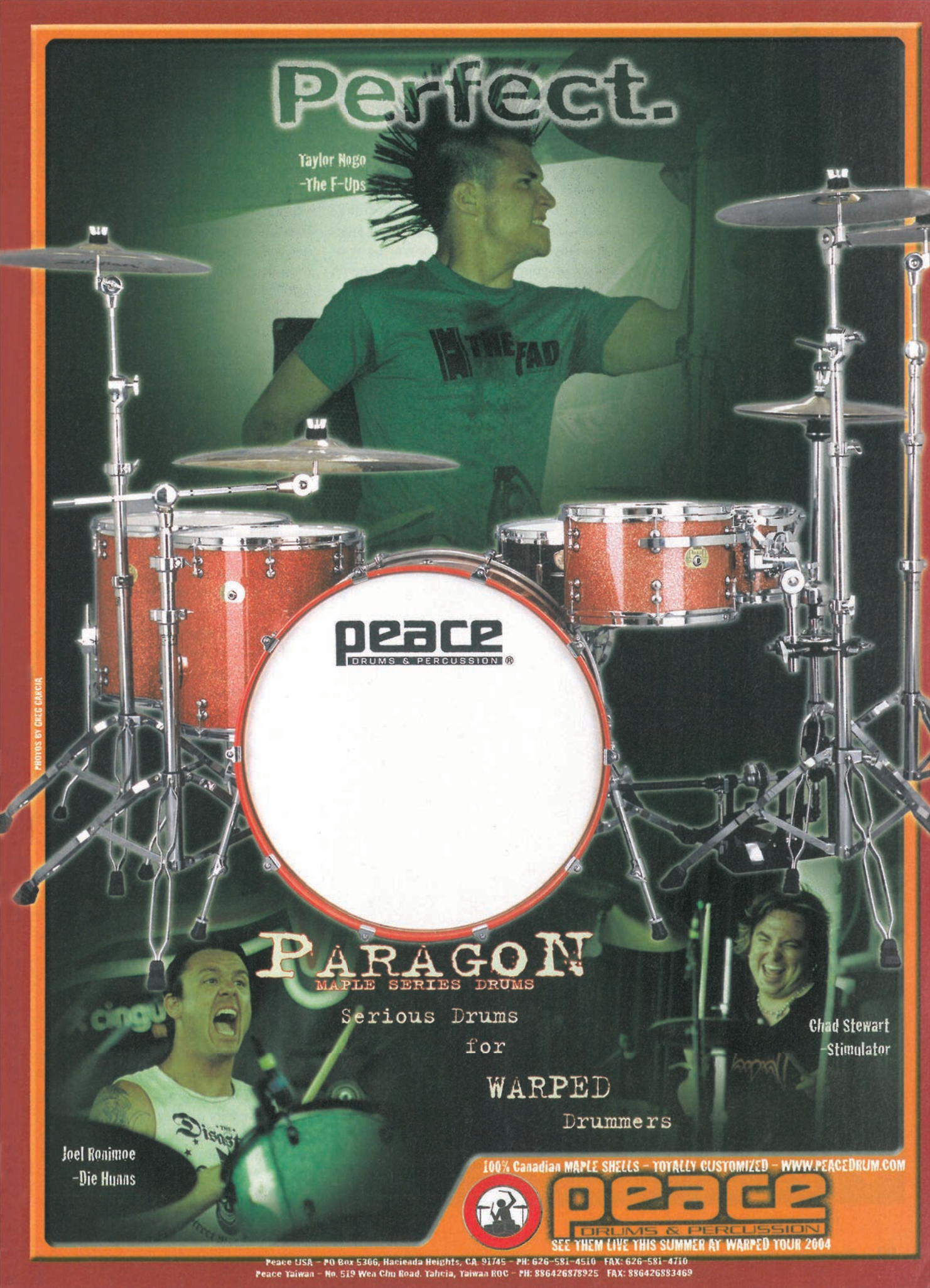
Ringo: My brother Henry wrote his first song when he was four years old.

MD: How and when did your record become a reality?

Ringo: We had moved to Nashville around '91 to try to make it as the first Mexican-American family country band. But that didn't work out. So we moved back to Texas in '96 and hooked up with management. We started playing all around Austin. People really loved our music, and word got around. We signed with an independent record label, and then Epic came along after we had sold around 100,000 CDs ourselves.

MD: There's a big difference between going out and playing cantinas and clubs to going into a recording studio and making a record for a major label. What did

"I DON'T OVERTHINK WHAT I'M DOING. I JUST FEEL IT. AND I KNOW WHEN I MESS UP, BECAUSE IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT, YOU KNOW?"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you learn in that process, and how did you learn to work in a studio setting?

Ringo: We had three weeks to do the album for Epic, and we just had fun. I don't know if I learned anything except maybe to keep the time steady and to not overplay. We'd been in the studio before, even though this was a much bigger deal.

MD: What are your favorite songs on the album, and why?

Ringo: That's a hard question. Probably "Velvet Sky," because I love the song and the way it sounds—the melody in it and the vocal parts. Also, "More Than Love," because just knowing that my brothers and I wrote it and that it sounds really good makes me very proud.

"Heaven," which is the single, is the world's biggest prayer. It was a prayer my brother put down on paper that we put music to. The song "Real Emotions" rocks. And "Señorita" is like a hot summer day, where you roll down the windows of your truck and blast the tune on the radio and jam out to it.

MD: Were there any tracks that were difficult or that presented a bit of a challenge?

Ringo: "Onda" was done in one take, but it was a challenge. We had a live version of the tune that we were talking about putting on the album. But the producer said, "Why don't we try beating the live version? Let's cut it again in the studio, live, no overdubs." And that version came out better than the concert one, so we put it on the album. The tune has a little drum solo on it. In fact, Carlos Santana asked me who the percussionist was on that song, and I said, "There are no percussionists or conga players on there. It's all me on the drumset."

MD: How did you guys hook up with Santana?

Ringo: He had received our CD and had fallen in love with it.

MD: You sing and play at the same time. Did you overdub the vocals on the record?

Ringo: I overdubbed the vocals because you don't want the drums to bleed into the vocal mic'. But that's only in the studio. Live I sing and play at the same time.

MD: I know you've been doing it a long time, but is that a challenge at all?

Ringo: Not really. I really don't have to think about it anymore. I'm just playing my instrument and singing my part and having fun with it. It really isn't too hard.

MD: What does your kit consist of?

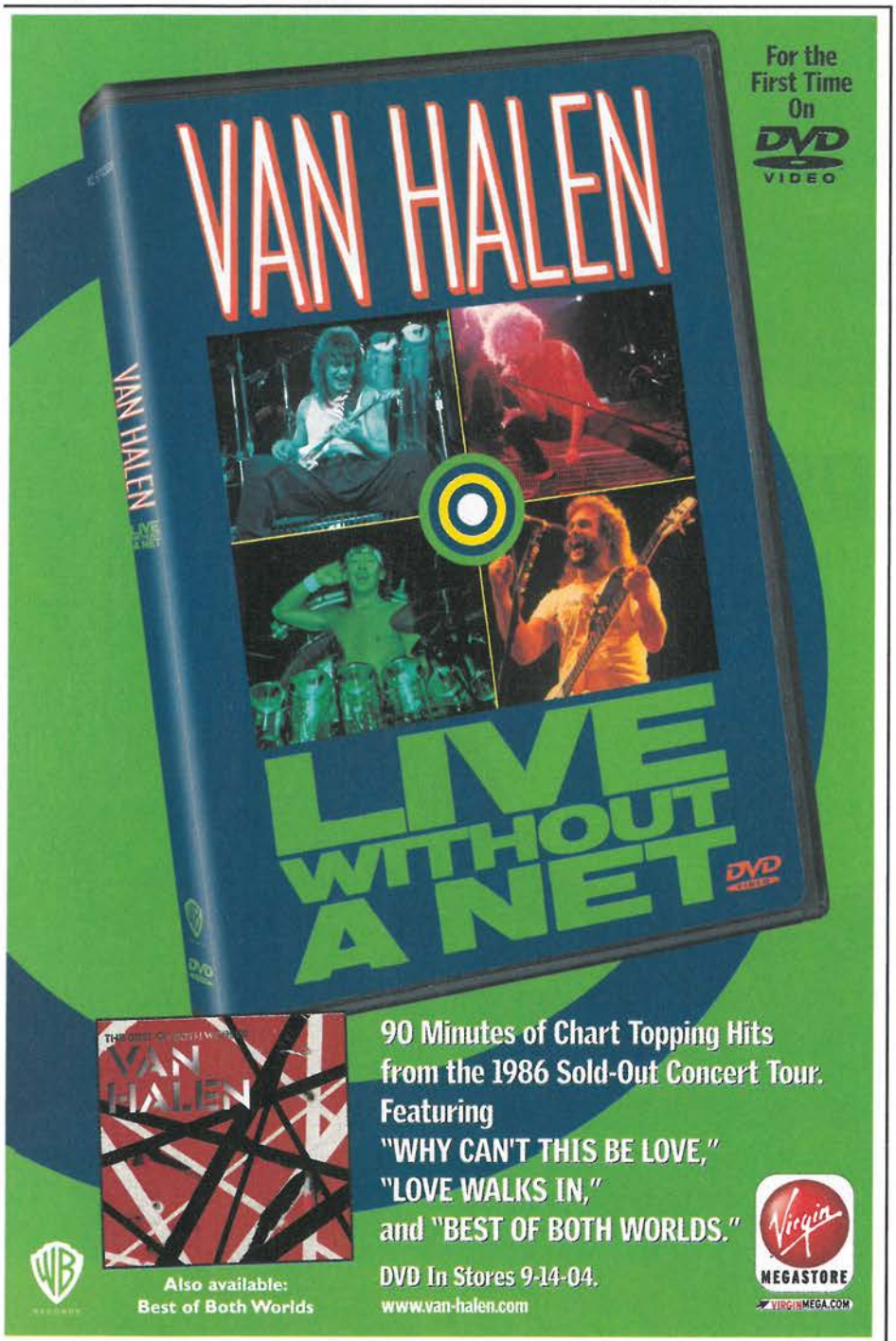
Ringo: A snare, one rack tom, two floor toms, and a kick. I use three crash cymbals, one ride, a splash, a hi-hat, a cowbell, and a woodblock. I also like to play with my snares turned off, to get a timbale sound like on "Onda."

MD: What kind of drums do you play?

Ringo: Fibes. I'm using Zildjian cymbals, but I don't have a cymbal endorsement. I use Pro-Mark drumsticks. I use Aquarian heads on my toms, Remos for my kick, and Evans on my snare.

MD: You guys definitely take a no-frills approach. Is it a challenge to play in a trio?

Ringo: There's no challenge at all. I think playing in a trio is great. Whatever I need from a keyboard, my brother Jojo is doing on the bass. Whatever is needed, they can do. And I'm doing my best to fill in the rest. I have a lot of wide-open space to play in, which I *love*. But I have to choose wisely. I don't want to be one of those "overplayers."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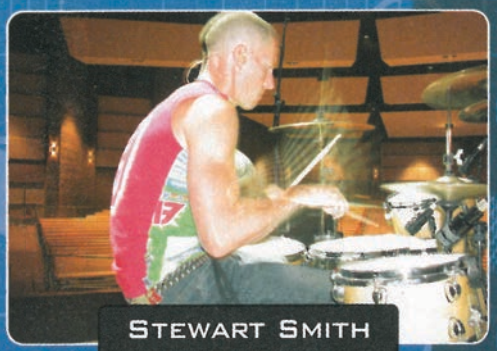

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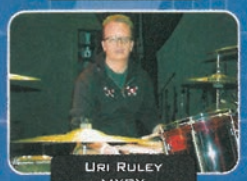

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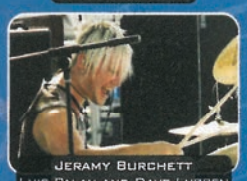

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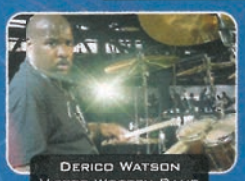

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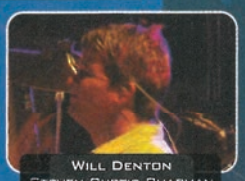

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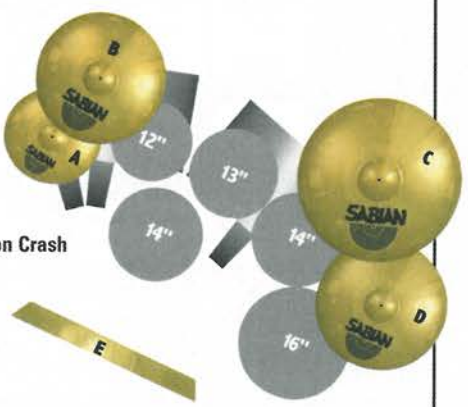

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Ringo Garza

MD: Do you still practice?

Ringo: I used to practice regularly, but it's a challenge now with all of the gigs we do. I do try to work out whenever I can so I have more stamina. That's something I need a lot of.

MD: How do you keep the stamina?

Ringo: Water, Gatorade, and a big heavy-duty fan blowing on me.

MD: Live, do you do a solo?

Ringo: I try to. It's up to the audience to say whether it's good or not. I just play what I feel. I don't overthink what I'm doing. I just feel it. And I know when I mess up because it doesn't feel right, you know? I play my heart out and it feels very fluid, like water.

MD: You kidded about your brothers a moment ago. What are the pros and cons of working with family members?

Ringo: Working with anybody for a long period of time, there will be a little tension at times. My brothers and I are very close. In a normal relationship, there might be a disagreement like, "I'm not ready to wake up," or "I'm in the shower first," stuff like that. But being in a band with your brothers isn't like a normal relationship or anything else I know.

We're very passionate about what we do. We *love* it. And music is our life. We do it in the name of God. He's blessed us with the talent to do this, and we're here to use our God-given talent until the day we die.

MD: Do you have disagreements with your brothers in the studio?

Ringo: That's probably where they happen the most, just because everything is under a microscope and you have to be at the top of your game. We're a live act, really, and we know what that's about. But in the studio, we understand you have to give the people something they'll want to listen to when we're not there.

MD: One last question about your brothers: Do they rib you about being the baby?

Ringo: I'm a little stockier than they are, so they don't mess with me anymore. When I was little, they could beat the crap out of me. But not anymore!

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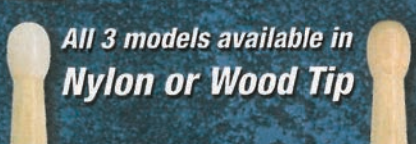

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Bill Bruford

Prog-Rock Pioneer And Contemporary Jazz Innovator

by Ken Micallef

A case can be made that there is no more revolutionary drummer in the history of rock than Bill Bruford. Bringing rudimental, orchestral, and jazz techniques to bear on the relatively primitive terrain of '70s rock drumming, Bruford was one of the creators of the ill-named "art rock" style. But his contributions have outlasted any labels.

Fernando Aceves

Bruford's colorful and creative early drumming still sounds futuristic, with architectural phrasing and a combination of radical tuning, brilliant rudimental-based conceptions, and dauntless execution. From the rattling triplet drops of Yes's "Heart Of The Sunrise" and the head-boring snare-drum thwack of "Roundabout," to the interplay of *Larks' Tongues In Aspic*–era King Crimson, to the searing complexity of his own *One Of A Kind*, Bruford found innovative solutions to music that posed novel questions.

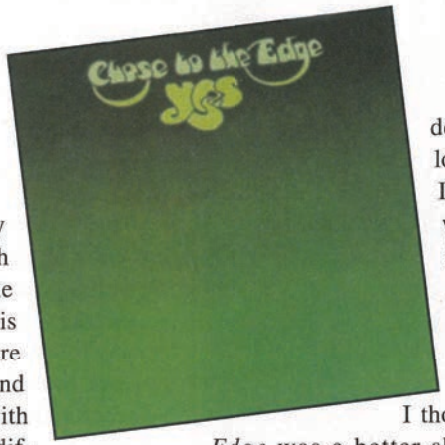
Ironically, some of Bruford's greatest triumphs were the product of intra-band hatreds, mind-numbing recording sessions, and other obstacles. "The problem with stories in *Modern Drummer*," Bruford explains from his Yewhurst home in the Surrey countryside, "is that everything seems so perfect. Nobody has any problems and nobody makes any mistakes. Nobody makes a bad record and nobody gets mad. But we *all* make bad records and we *all* get mad."

Bruford's musical journey remains a forward-thinking one to the present day, with the release of his ninth Earthworks effort, *Random Acts Of Happiness*. Earthworks continues to tour the world, and Bruford is in the midst of forming two record labels: Summerfold, to release his recorded works since 1987, and Winterfold, which will focus on archival, pre-1987 music.

About his drumming and vast contribution to music at large, Bruford is typically self-deprecating. "For such modest talent as I have," he says, "I've been extremely well heard and extremely well remunerated. I have no complaints about whether anyone has heard my stuff. They have probably heard way too *much* of me. It's time for someone else to have a go." In this article, Bill applies equal candor to descriptions of his recorded history.

Yes

Close To The Edge (1972)



The scene then was heady and exciting—although one never knows it at the time. You just think life is always like that. We were all young, hot-headed, and confrontational, along with being from completely different social and cultural backgrounds. We had university-trained musicians and guys from the street. How we got a record made at all, much less a good one, is a complete mystery.

Fragile had given us a lot of confidence. We felt we could do anything. Somebody had said that Simon & Garfunkel had spent three months in the studio, so we were determined to spend longer than they did. It was an escalating warfare of more time in studios, bigger PA systems, bigger orchestras, and bigger bold-on effects.

I thought *Close To The Edge* was a better-shaped record than *Fragile*, which was so named because the band was so fragile and highly argumentative. The name *Close To The Edge* was also taken from the fact that the band was about to implode at any moment. [Singer] Jon Anderson loved classical music, and he wanted *Close To The Edge* to be on an epic scale. That was the nature of progressive rock of the day—though we didn't call it that. We just thought it was more interesting.

We did a lot of tape editing then. There was an edit almost every thirty seconds, four bars at a time. I didn't do drum overdubs; we stuck every passage onto the previous passage, sixteen bars at a time. Incredibly, it worked. The process would go on till four or five in the morning. Various members would fall asleep, only to wake up and find that their precious part had been binned.

I'd take a while to get drum sounds. We'd mike up the drums and play halfway through a twenty-minute composition on which nobody knew the ending and nobody could remember the beginning. The studio time would run out and we'd go play a couple of dates somewhere. Then we'd come back, set up the drums, and continue the

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Bill Bruford

recording. You wouldn't do that now; it would upset the flow of the recording.

My drumming didn't seem very adventurous to me at the time. I was coming from jazz, so I was familiar with big band arrangements, and improvising, and odd meters. I thought Yes was going to be a jazz group, so I suggested all this stuff. It didn't *become* a jazz group, but that didn't matter to me. Yes was sometimes a "little big band" in its rhythmic arrangements. We also did a lot of experimentation with tuning and sounds. For example, I played conga drums through a wah-wah pedal on "America." We had milk bottle overdubs, too. But usually we had the drums wide open, and I hit them hard.

I left Yes after *Close To The Edge* because I was bored to tears, I couldn't argue anymore, and I wanted a cold shower. You can only go so far with people before you smell repetition coming in. I needed to play with other people in order to improve and understand my own abilities.

King Crimson
Red (1974)

Red is a better-formed record than *Starless And Bible Black* or *Larks' Tongues In Aspic* [the other studio albums from the mid-'70s Crimson era]. The success of a record is its tightness of focus. What's it about? *Red* was about guys who could play guitar and who knew about other styles of music, playing heavy metal. It was also very black-hearted and dark—a very bleak record. I would like to be more fun about this, but it was hell! This wasn't a case of drinking coffee and having fun. This was pulling teeth.

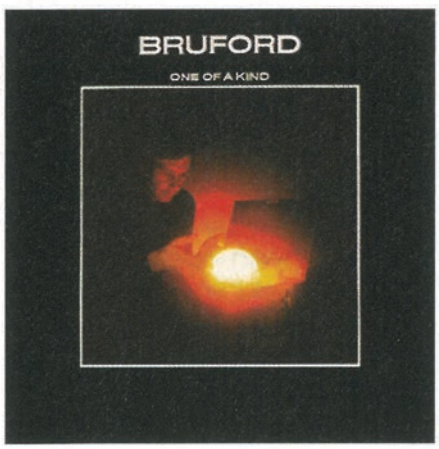
Robert Fripp had decided to forgo the passing of any opinion. That's a good start, right? The record got made by John Wetton and myself. Robert said, "I will play this and this, and then you guys pick." An essential trust had broken down between the three of us. Some were on mind-expanding chemicals, which didn't help. No one knew where the record was going. Like *Close To The Edge*, it took on its own life and finished itself without the musicians deserving the luck to finish it. But it works. Kurt Cobain really liked that

The groove of *Red* is very strong. It's all live takes. King Crimson could play all the way through something, and the arrangements weren't as complicated as Yes's arrangements were. I surprised myself with the drumming. There was something on "One More Red Nightmare." I hear my hands and arms going and it sounds great, though I don't know what I was doing.

Drum-wise, I was playing a mixture of Ludwig and Hayman drums: two toms, two floors. I also had a very trashy sounding cymbal, which is appropriate, since I found it in the trash. It was a cheap cymbal called a Zilket and it wouldn't fit in the trashcan, so someone had bent it to fit. It had this wonderful, wicked fast decay. That cymbal lasted six months and then died.

Bill Bruford
One Of A Kind (1979)

I had been in several groups, and the period in which you're in a group usually produces a couple of albums that are working towards the real *killer* album. I think *One Of A Kind* was the killer of that particular group. That band toured as much as Allan Holdsworth would tour with us, bless him. He was always ambivalent about his work, and he wasn't too happy with some of the things we were doing. I was arrogant enough to want to edit him: have him play



here and stop there, which caused him some frustration. He was terrific, though, and he gave a great performance. The group also had a strong keyboard player in Dave Stewart. He made all of the wonderful textures off of which Allan could shine. And then we had this dynamic bass player, Jeff Berlin, who shocked everyone.

That was the second record that I had done a lot of writing for [after *Feels Good*

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Stinkers, Duds, And Clinkers

Yes
Union (1991)

A ghastly, overblown, cosmetically enhanced, Botox-fueled behemoth. A cast of thousands, a huge budget, and a record company that hadn't a clue what it wanted. Originally it was Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe. That doubled in size by adding the California Yes remnants, being Chris Squire, Trevor Rabin, and Alan White, among others. The two bands were welded together transatlantically by technology. That combination was apparently found lacking in musical talent, so then a huge number of studio musicians were also invited onto the sinking ship. The music got steadily worse and worse. He who pays the piper calls the tune. The bigger the record-company budget, the greater the record-company interference.

We had sold a lot of records as Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe. But the label thought, "That's not enough. We'll marry that group with the old Yes and add a cast of thousands, and we'll sell twice as many, won't we?" Well, the answer was no.

Absolute Elsewhere
In Search Of Ancient Gods (1976)

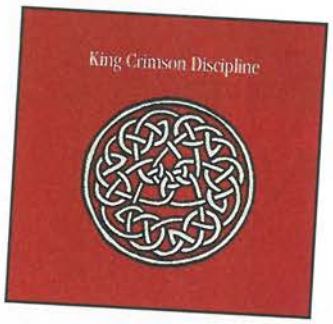
This and Yes's *Union* stand as lessons to all musicians. Absolute Elsewhere was just a horrendous session. Usually, in the rules of the session game, you are an anonymous player. The problem with anonymity is that it only holds good so long as the producers are not expecting to sell any records. If your name has some record-selling ability to it, look out. It will be all over the front of the album.

I went in to do a studio date, which turned out to be some sci-fi stuff. I duly played the drums, and then I left the building. I can't remember much about it, except that it wasn't very good music, and I don't think I played very well on it. I was just doing a day's work earning a living. But the drummer from Yes couldn't suddenly be a studio musician, so the next thing I know, it's my latest album! Problem is, a lot of what one plays in the studio will be complete drivel.

To Me], and somehow it just worked. We liked to make things choppy with odd meters; we thought we were a fancy rock group without a singer. The album has become one of the bibles of the fusion repertoire, though it was received with stunning indifference in England at the time. The way the English viewed things was that if there was some technical dexterity, then it had to appear effortless. It did better in the US. Americans are more comfortable with the product of obvious hard work.

We toured with Brand X with the wonderful Mike Clark on drums. We also did a national television special, which I'm trying to get out on DVD.

King Crimson
Discipline (1981)



This was a very exciting time—post-punk and definitely post-progressive rock. There are a lot of American ideas from people like Laurie Anderson. People were talking about village music, and how the Balinese did things, and minimalism, and Steve Reich. Electronic drums were now available, and we could make something out of all of that.

The opening track came directly from the minimalists: the idea of a line that would repeat every thirty-five seconds, with another musician playing a different configuration of notes to which you would hook up and then depart again. They were modular compositions rather than standard rock. The "discipline" referred to by the title was the discipline of not attracting attention to yourself. It is a village in harmony—players working together for the common good. I was playing a collection of instruments: Tama Octobans, Tama Gong toms, Boobams, Remo RotoToms, electronic and acoustic drums, and no hi-hat.

Around then, Robert Fripp wrote a diary for *Musician* magazine, in which all of the band's internal debates were exposed. His comments regarding my playing were usually enormously negative. For example, he said, "I can understand Bill not wanting to be the timekeeper of the band.... What I object to is his *disturbing* my time."

King Crimson
Absent Lovers: Live In Montreal 1984 (1998)

This is my favorite King Crimson record. It was a live recording of the last two nights of the band from 1984, and everyone is really together. I didn't know we played that good. It's my favorite lineup, with Fripp scowling at Adrian Belew, Tony Levin, and myself.

This recording was made on the night before Robert fired the whole band "'cause we were no good, and had run our course, and were useless." The feeling after these concerts was pure poison. We had a rather somber drink in Montreal, knowing we were all for the axe the next morning.

Earthworks
Earthworks (1987)

Finally, I got away from the guitar!

Actually, I love the guitar. I played with Holdsworth, Fripp, and Belew—three titans of the instrument. I wish we drummers could play that differently. Drummers are starting to homogenize into the same guy, which frightens me.

Still, Earthworks' no-guitar concept was very exciting. The whole band was based around the electronic drumset. I could play samples and chords at the same time. The album had brilliant young British players like Django Bates and Ian Bellamy. We had an upright acoustic bass along with my electronic kick, so it was going to sound different for sure.

That album was good because it asked more questions than it had answers to. Is it jazz? I don't know. Can you have jazz with electronic drums? The whole of the story is about me finding my way back to jazz.

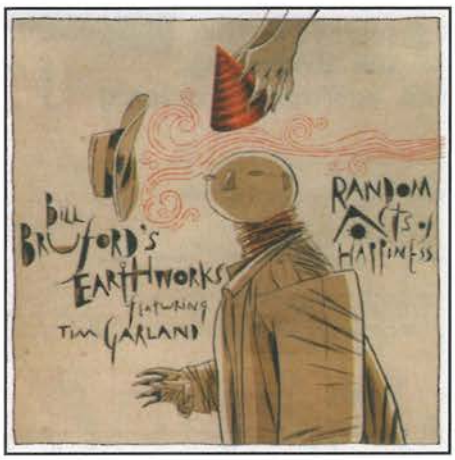
Earthworks was *USA Today*'s Number 3 album of the year for 1987. It sold 50,000

copies, but I didn't get paid for 20,000 of them because the American distributor went bankrupt.

Earthworks

Random Acts Of Happiness (2004)

Now we have Tim Garland on woodwinds. Tim's a wonderful writer who used to be with Chick Corea's Origin. He's much revered in England. We've got pianist Steve Hamilton, who went through all four years of Berklee and actually enjoyed it. And on bass we have Mark Hodgson.



There are no auditions for Earthworks. Like Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers—to whom Earthworks is sometimes compared—it's all word of mouth. Bates recommended Bellamy, and that's the way it goes. They come from an area of British jazz that I am very into. The compositions are strong on this record, with contributions from Tim Garland, who is a monster. We also cover "One Of A Kind" as an acoustic version.

I currently use the drums set flat at the same height. The set is symmetrical, with two toms and two cymbals on my right, and two toms and two cymbals on my left. The drums are not arranged in pitch order, which means the phrasing will come out differently with some ideas. It also means I can open up my left side more than I otherwise would. It facilitates left-hand lead if I'm so inclined, and it strengthens left-hand interpretations. I often configure the drums in such a way that makes it hard, if not impossible, to play to begin with. Learning to overcome things like that will strengthen a person.

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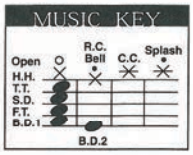
Slipknot's Joey Jordison Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)

by Ed Breckenfeld



Out of Iowa comes Slipknot, returning for a third full-length album after a lengthy layoff filled with side projects and break-up rumors. *Vol. 3 (The Subliminal Verses)* finds this metal troupe's brand of mayhem flourishing under the guidance of producer-to-the-stars Rick Rubin. Joey Jordison outguns most of the drumming competition with displays of raw speed and power, contrasted against surprising stretches of restraint when called for. Here are some examples.

"Prelude 3.0"

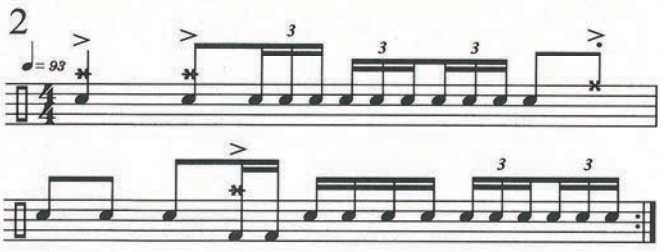
The dreamy opening track features a subtle beat shift and some nice cymbal work. (0:57)

1

"The Blister Exists"

The album's first hit contains this interesting marching drum sequence, with the snare part doubled by the band's percussionists. (2:17)

2



"Three Nil"

Joey's flashy licks shine throughout the album, like the fill setting up the intro of this track. (0:55)

3

"Opium Of The People"

This quick little seven-beat transition pattern showcases Jordison's ability to place unusual drum and cymbal combinations in furiously fast fills. (0:33)

4

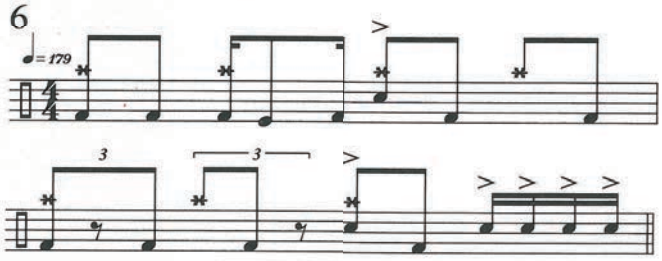
"Pulse Of The Maggots"

The title pulse of this track is conveyed through the song's guitar riff together with this matching drum beat. (1:00)

5

In the chorus, Joey steers his half-time groove through some compelling rhythm changes. (2:16)

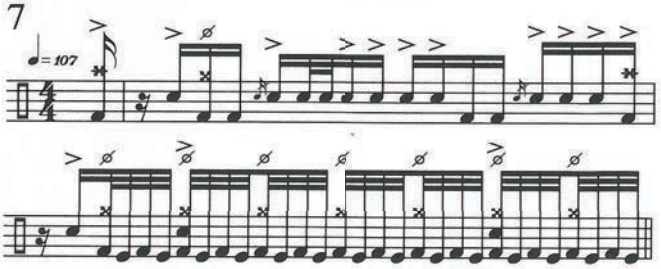
6



"The Nameless"

It's speed time in this tune, as Jordison's 32nd-note double kick pattern shifts the intro into high gear. (0:20)

7



Later in the track, Joey whips out this classic quads lick. (2:41)

8

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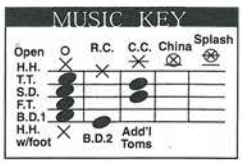
Tool's Danny Carey "Schism"

Transcribed by Joe Bergamini



Danny Carey has been placing highly in the *MD* Readers Poll for quite some time now, which should be no surprise to anyone who has checked out his impressive drumming. Danny's creativity, chops, and ease in handling Tool's complex music has set him apart from most rock drummers on the scene today.

"Schism," from Tool's 2001 masterwork *Lateralus*, is an advanced chart with changing meters throughout the tune. The main verse is comprised of a two-bar bass riff that contains a measure of 5/8 followed by a measure of 7/8. The easiest way to count this is as follows: 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3. Try counting in this fashion along with the bass.

Breaking odd meters down into groups of two and three is one of the most common and useful ways to learn and understand the phrases. The part Danny plays in the main verse section is a four-bar phrase that repeats. It moves from a high tom to the hi-hat and back, and contains lots of little details on splash and Chinese cymbals.

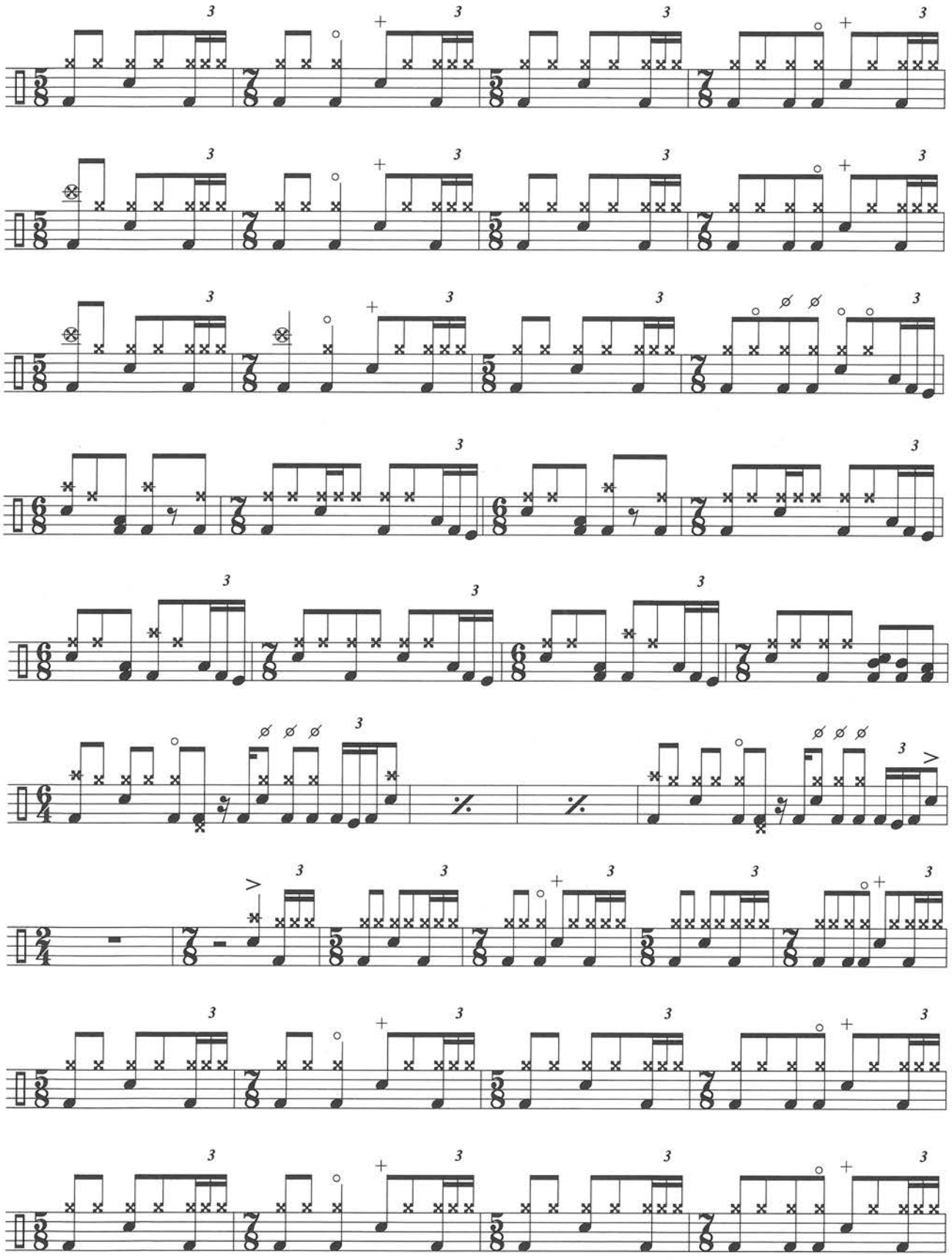
The B verse moves to a 6/8-7/8 pattern, which flows easily thanks to Danny's drum part. Notice that one of the "backbeats" in fact lands on beat 1 of the 6/8 bar. This section is followed by an aggressive bridge in 6/4 where the entire band riffs on the same rhythm.

The middle of the song features an extended break with no drums that can be a little tricky to count at first. But if you count carefully you'll hear that this section stays in 3/8, and the phrases are nine bars long. As things build back up and the drums re-enter, there is a bar of 2/4 as well. From here to the end of the tune the energy builds, climaxing in the last two sections of the song, where Danny lets loose with massive double bass/tom combinations in odd groupings.

If you look at the groupings Danny plays near the end of the song, you'll notice that they're all based on 16th-note triplets played on the toms and bass drums. This isn't as hard as it looks on paper. The right hand plays 8th notes on the floor tom, while the bass drums each play one of the two inner partials of the triplets. Although these figures are notated R-L on the chart, you can reverse the footing if it's more comfortable for you.

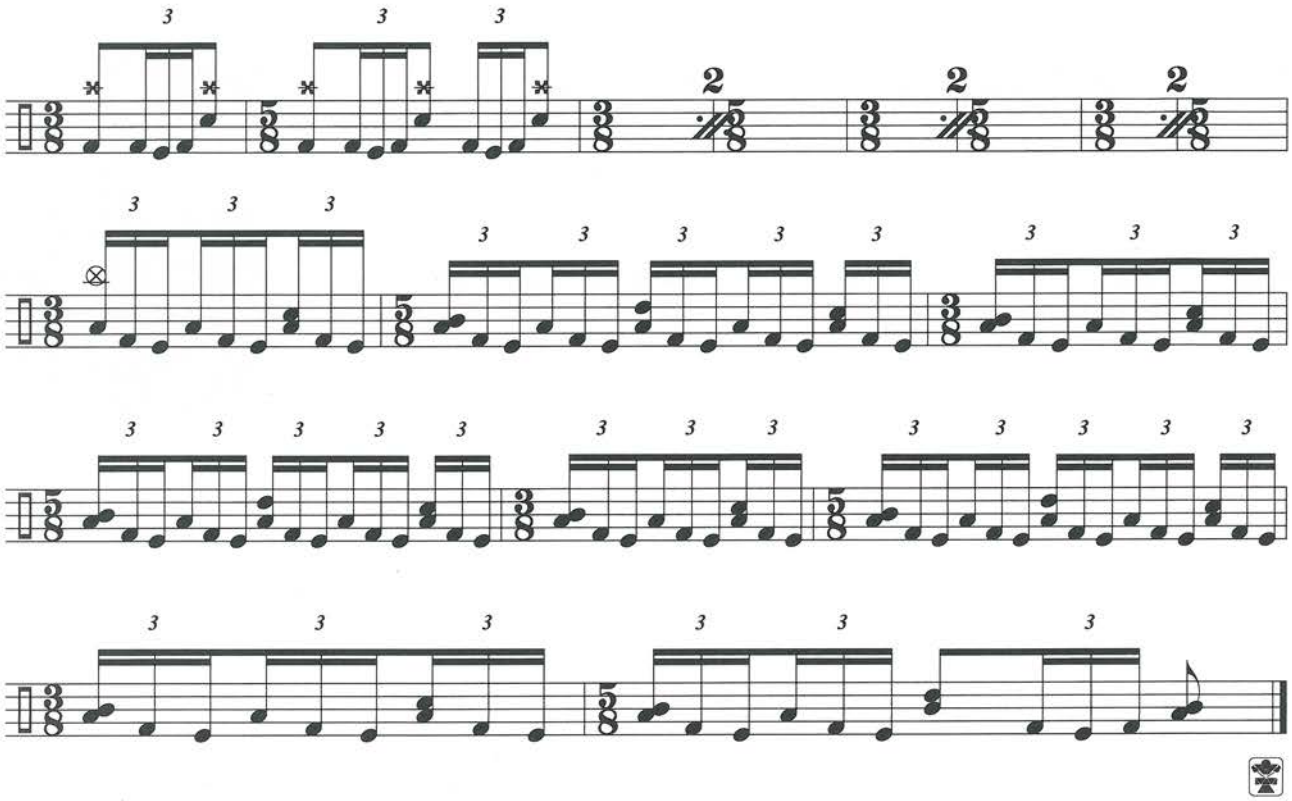
As you listen to the song and follow the meter changes, you'll likely decide that the most impressive thing about it is that Danny phrases everything so smoothly, and that his ideas totally complement and enhance the song. Odd meters in and of themselves don't make interesting music; they require the same commitment to creativity, groove, and musicality as straight 4/4 does. Here you can see that Danny Carey ranks right up there with Bruford, Peart, Cobham, and Colaiuta in his ability to make great music out of odd times.

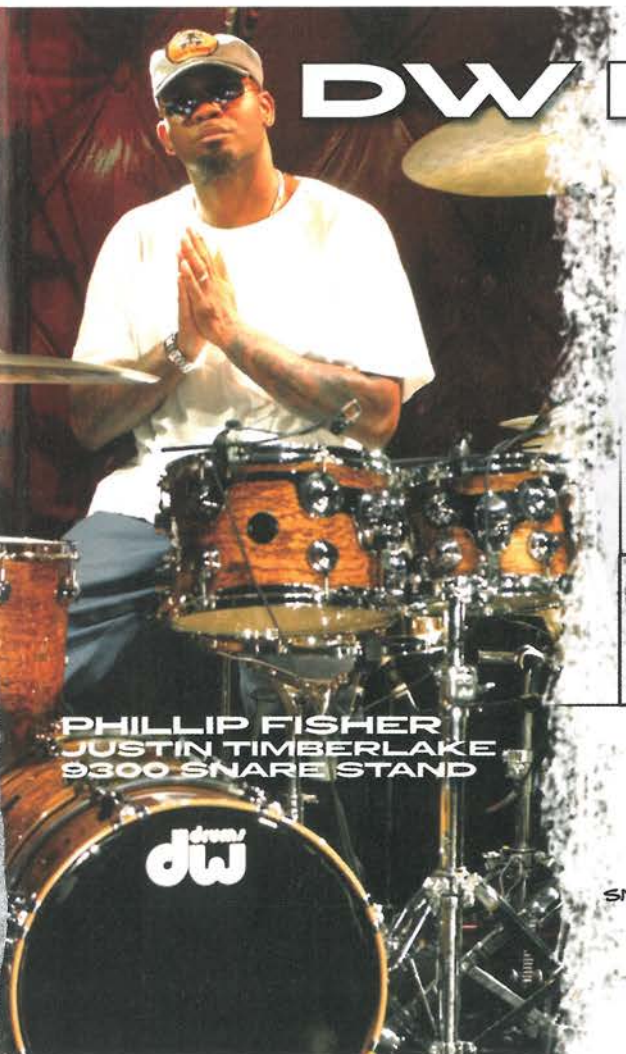
Danny Carey



Note: subdivide into 8 phrases
of 9 bars each
Bass & vocals re-enter
(4 phrases of 9 bars)
72
36
4
4

Danny Carey





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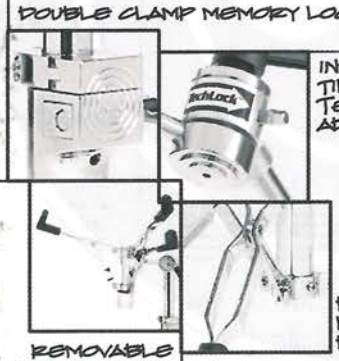
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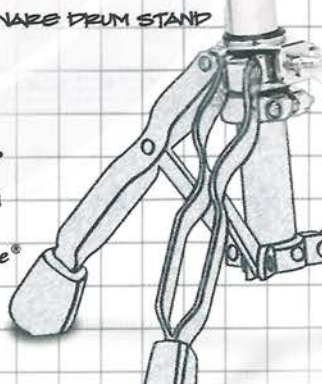

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More Metric Modulation

Left Turns With Right Grooves

by Ari Hoenig

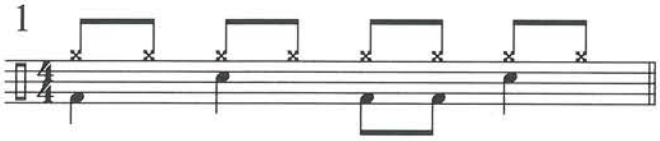
MUSIC KEY

H.H. X
S.D.
B.D.

Welcome to my second installment on metric modulations using common grooves. These ideas can help you create tension or an exciting feeling in the music by using the same grooves and patterns you already know.

In my last article (September '04 *MD*), we took this simple groove...

1



...and superimposed it over an eight-bar phrase using a triplet pulse as the basis. Now we'll try the same thing with the dotted-quarter-note pulse as the basis.

When working on these concepts, always keep the original tempo in your head. Ideally you don't want to have to think about how long or how many times you need to play a cycle so that it comes out right. Instead, you want to be able to improvise on the spot, going in and out of the modulation whenever you want to.

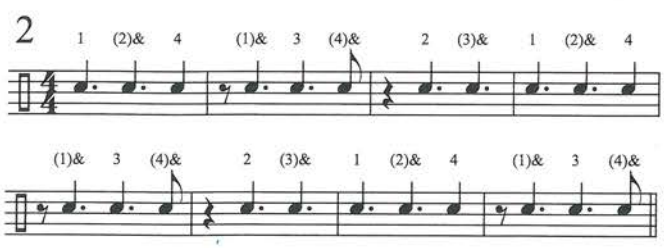
For example, maybe you'll want to play one of these ideas for only two and a half bars, or start an idea on the sixth bar of an eight-bar phrase. I rarely play the exercises as written. Rather, these examples are created so you can get comfortable enough with the rhythm that you won't have to think about it in a mathematical way. Eventually you'll be able to hear it as naturally as anything else you play.

First we'll look at the basic rhythm we'll be using. This rhythm is otherwise known as two-over-three. It's essential that you become comfortable with it and how it sounds in four-, eight-, sixteen-, and thirty-two-bar phrases, as this is the foundation for this entire article. Practice it first while playing the hi-hat with your left foot on 1 and 3, then on 2 and 4. You'll notice that the pattern cycles after three bars.

Basic Rhythm

Dotted Quarter Notes Over An Eight-Bar Phrase

2



Now we'll do the same thing that we did with triplets in the previous column. First let's take the groove from Example 1 and write it out based on the rhythm of Example 2. (Initially it may help to play the ride cymbal part along with quarter notes on the hi-hat with your left foot.)

The Groove

3

People often ask me how I can use these ideas in my playing and manage to not sound mechanical, like I'm doing a math problem in my head. Well, it's because I've internalized these rhythms starting on different parts of the beat. For instance, here's the same exercise starting on the "&" of 1.

Basic Rhythm

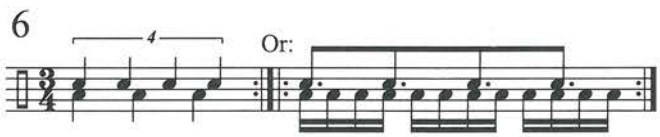
4

The Groove

5

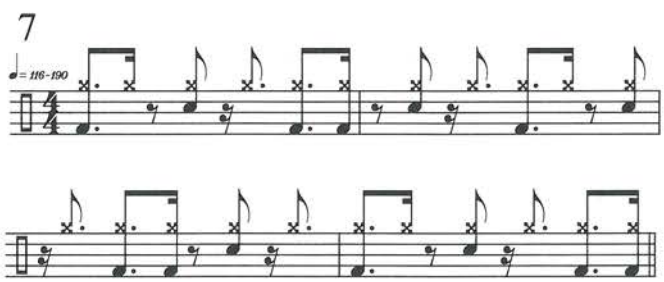
The following example is exactly twice as fast as the others and has the same dotted-quarter-note base. Here there are two notes for every dotted quarter note, which makes it a cycle of dotted 8th notes. It can also be thought of as four-over-three.

Basic Rhythm



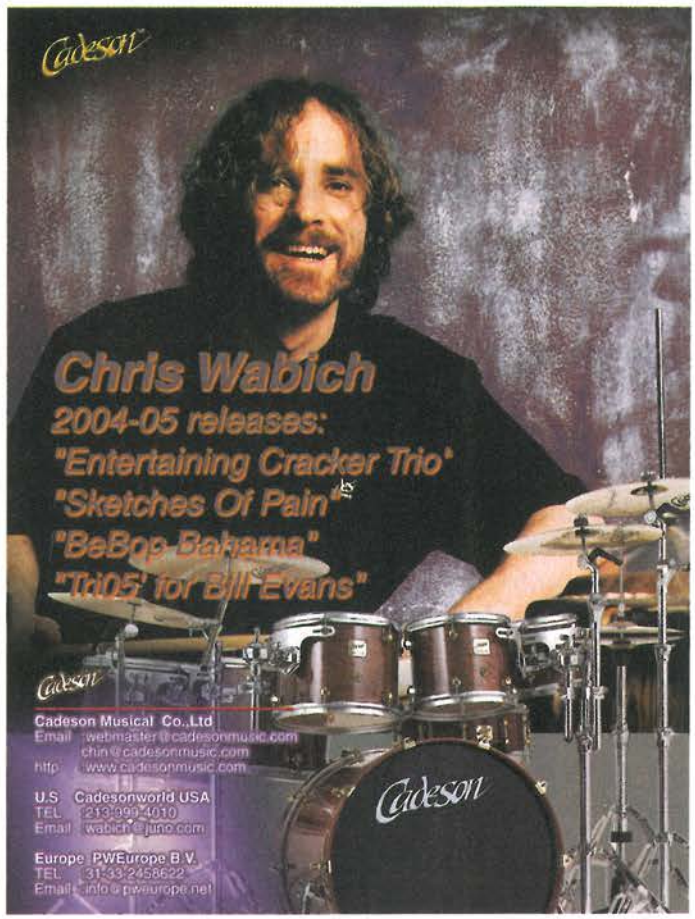
This example is generally played at a slower tempo. Here's how the groove looks over a four-bar phrase.

The Groove



The concepts presented here can be applied to any groove you want. I recommend practicing them along to your favorite CDs as well as with a metronome. Practicing along with CDs will give you a song form to play to, which is crucial for the developing these ideas. Happy modulating!

Ari Hoenig is a top New York jazz drummer. He currently works with Joshua Redman, Kenny Werner, Wayne Krantz, Jean-Michel Pilc, Seamus Blake, and Dave Kikoski.



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Over The Barline

Tips For Phrasing Like The Greats

by Sam Ruttenberg

MUSIC KEY

R.C.
S.D.
B.D.

When I was in college at the University Of Miami, one of the things I loved doing was going to hear jazz in the clubs. There was one club in particular called the Airport Lounge that brought in the biggest names in jazz every week. Many times my drummer friends and I would stand right outside the open door and listen, because we didn't have enough money to get in. Other times we would get in for the evening and even talk to drumming greats like Billy Hart and Art Blakey.

I remember listening to these guys take solos and becoming frustrated because I couldn't figure out where the time was. Their phrases didn't necessarily start and end at the barline. That's because they were playing *over* the barline, which is much more interesting than confining our playing to a musical "grid."

I have found that in order to realize phrases that go over the barline, you must *practice* phrases that go over the barline. For example, try this four-note phrase.

1

It's a simple four-beat pattern, but if you change the quarter rest at the end of the phrase to an 8th rest and repeat the pattern, you have a phrase that goes over the barline.

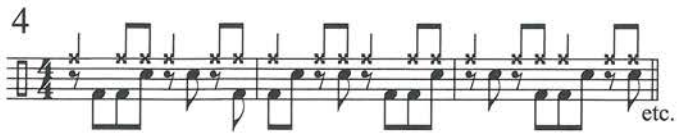
2

You can apply this simple, over-the-barline phrase by using a classic method book like George Stone's *Stick Control*. Go to the first page. Look at the first example. It's alternating right and left strokes. Play the R's on the bass drum and the L's on the snare drum. Practice this until you feel comfortable with it. Now add the jazz ride cymbal pattern with the hi-hat on 2 and 4. This gives you the full package.

3

The second example from *Stick Control* is RRLL. Applying it to the same over-the-barline phrase, it would be orchestrated on the drums like this:

4



Let's do the same with the third example from *Stick Control*, which is RLRR LRLL. (Again, the R's are played on the bass drum, the L's on the snare.)

5

You can practice the entire first column of *Stick Control* this way. Remember to take it slowly and use a metronome.

Another over-the-barline phrase that works is this:

6

You can apply the same principal here as we did for the previous pattern. Examples 7, 8, and 9 relate to 4, 5, and 6 above in how the pattern is orchestrated on the drums. You can do this kind of thing with any pattern. I chose a four-note phrase because it lies well with the four-note patterns from *Stick Control*.

7

8

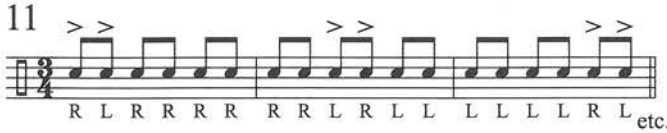
9

Practicing on the drums isn't the only way to understand how rhythms go over measures. Practicing on the pad can be just as good. If you take a look at Joe Morello's *Master Studies*, the first page of examples (page 7) offers many possibilities. Take the first exercise and play it as is.

10

Now play it in 3/4 time, making sure to count out loud as you play.

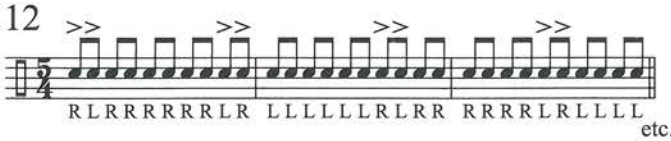
11



etc.

Next, try it in 5/4.

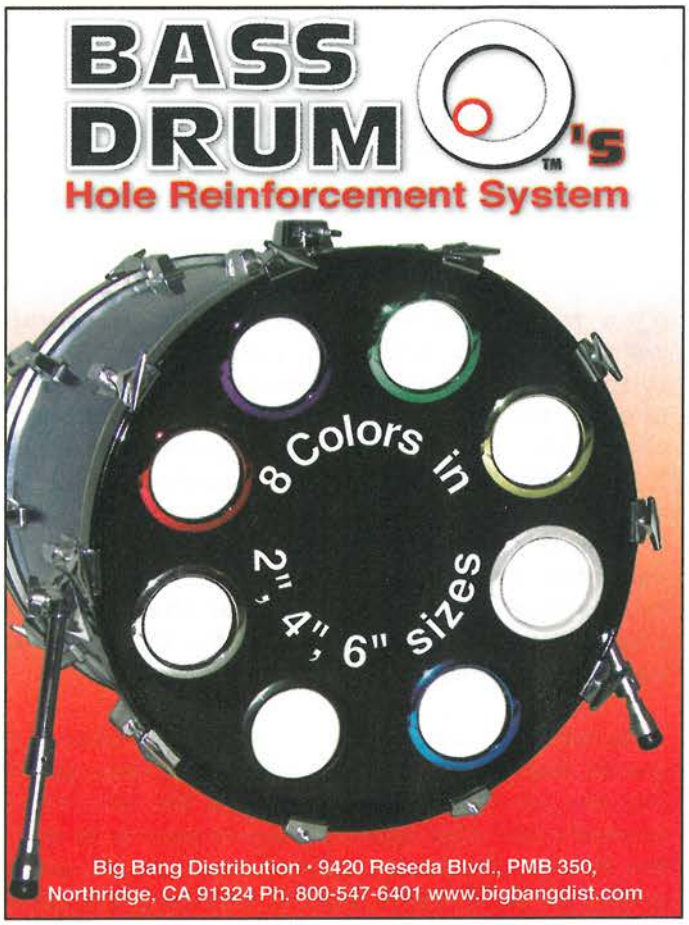
12



etc.

You'll find yourself playing over the barline and coming up with interesting combinations because of the repeated notes and accents. Play the whole page in this manner. Tap your foot on the downbeats, and remember to count out loud while you're playing, otherwise you won't get the result you're trying to achieve.

A student of Joe Morello, Sam Ruttenberg teaches drums and percussion at Rutgers University—Camden in New Jersey. He has recently performed with the Pennsylvania Ballet, The Opera Company Of Philadelphia, The Philly Pops, and Dave Brubeck. Sam also leads his own jazz trio.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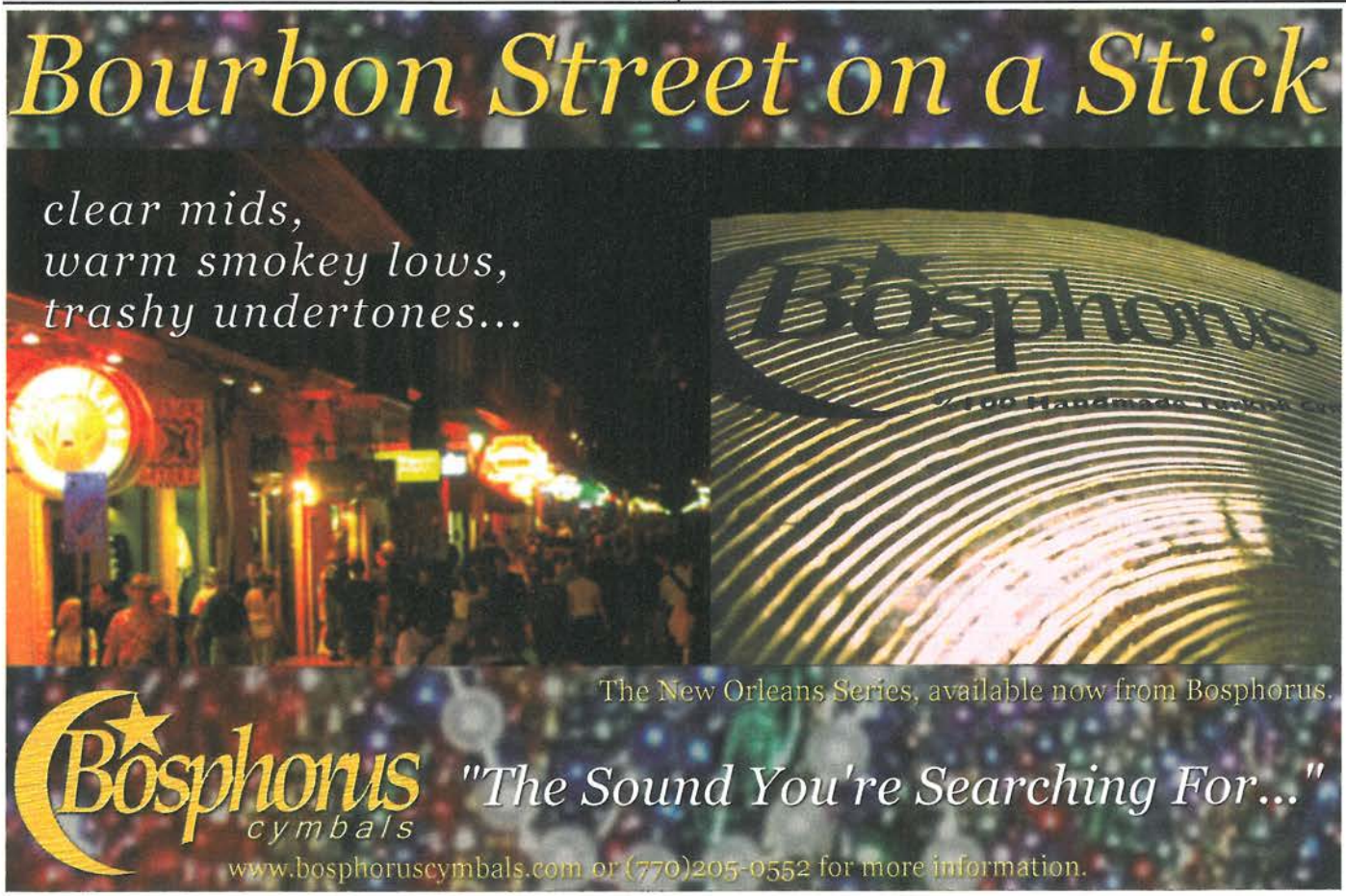


Reading Basics

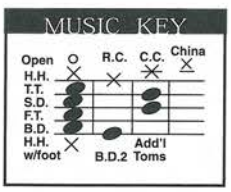
Part 5: Pitches And Drumset Notation

by Kelly Paletta

So far in this series we've covered a variety of note and rest values. For simplicity's sake, all of the exercises have been written on the third space from the bottom of the staff, which usually indicates the snare drum. So how does the notation system address an entire drumset? It's simple. Each line and space corresponds to one of the components of the drumset. For example, the first space from the bottom of the staff usually indicates bass drum. The third space usually indicates snare drum.

The notation system does not impose specific pitches on the drumset. That is to say that there is nothing on the page that indicates how your snare drum should be tuned. The crack of Carter Beauford's snare drum appears the same on paper as the thud of Don Henley's. The notation system as applied to the drumset assumes that the instrument cannot be tuned for specific pitches, so it ignores them.

Additionally, the rules about which drum appears on which space are not set in stone. In recent years there has been some standardization, but there still are no hard and fast rules about what each line and space indicates. To avoid confusion, drumset exercises and transcriptions usually include a key that specifies how the lines and spaces correspond to the drumset. Here's what a typical drumset key might look like.



That's all there is to it. You'll find many examples of drumset notation in every issue of *Modern Drummer*. The following examples illustrate 16th notes, 8th notes, dotted 8th notes, and quarter notes orchestrated on the drumset.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

When Reading Skills And Technical Ability Collide

Prior to this article, the reading exercises were all written on a single line. You might find it much more difficult to read exercises and transcriptions that are written for an entire drumset. Such pieces may be a challenge to your eyes *and* to your hands and feet. There are a few tricks that can help you conquer difficult material like this.

First of all, *relax*. It's easy to get frustrated when trying to tackle new material, but that sense of anxiety and frustration will get in the way of achieving your goal. Know that most of the exercises and transcriptions in *Modern Drummer* and other popular method books are meant to be challenging. You're not supposed to be able to play them perfectly the first time—or maybe even after a hundred times. There's no disgrace in spending several minutes, hours, or even days trying to get the hang of the material you find in this magazine.

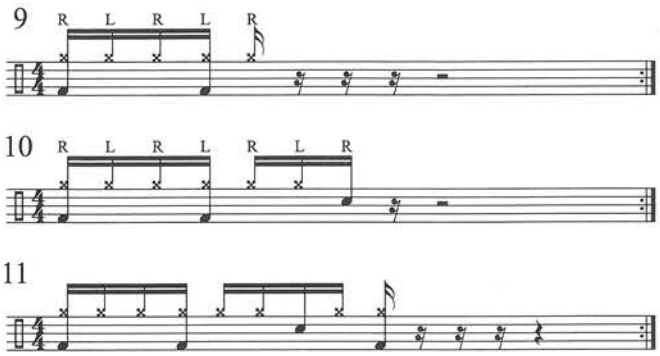
Secondly, take it slowly, and divide the pattern into chunks that you can comprehend. There is a saying that you can't swallow an elephant whole; you have to do it one bite at a time. Reading a challenging piece of music is often the same. An entire transcribed drum solo can be intimidating. But taken a few notes at a time, it's

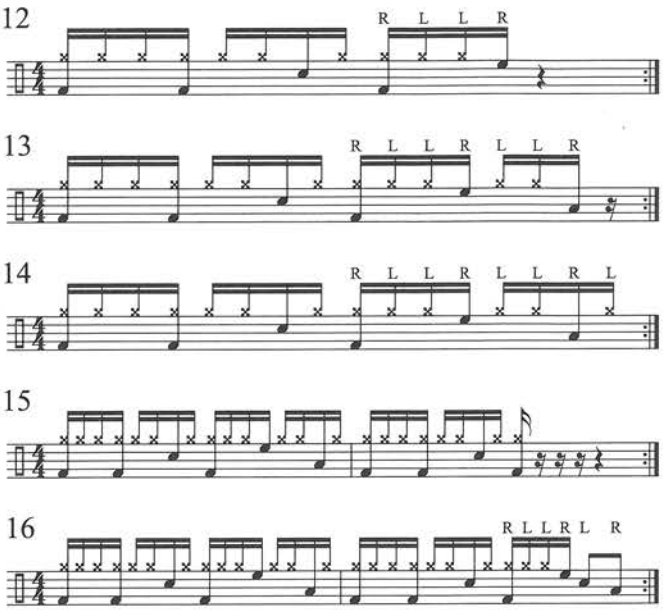
"Every good boy deserves fudge—unless he chooses to bang on those infernal drums all night long!"

—Tommy Lee's childhood next-door neighbor

not so tough. Attack challenging material in small, easy-to-understand groups of notes. Start with a short phrase and build incrementally until you can play it the whole way through.

To illustrate, each line below represents a small chunk of Example 7, presented earlier in this article. Repeat each line several times before moving on to the next. Sing the 1e&a song, and play along with a metronome or a drum machine to ensure that you're giving the rests their full due.





As you work on increasing the tempo, you may have to go back to playing (and reading) small chunks of the entire pattern.

Putting It All Together

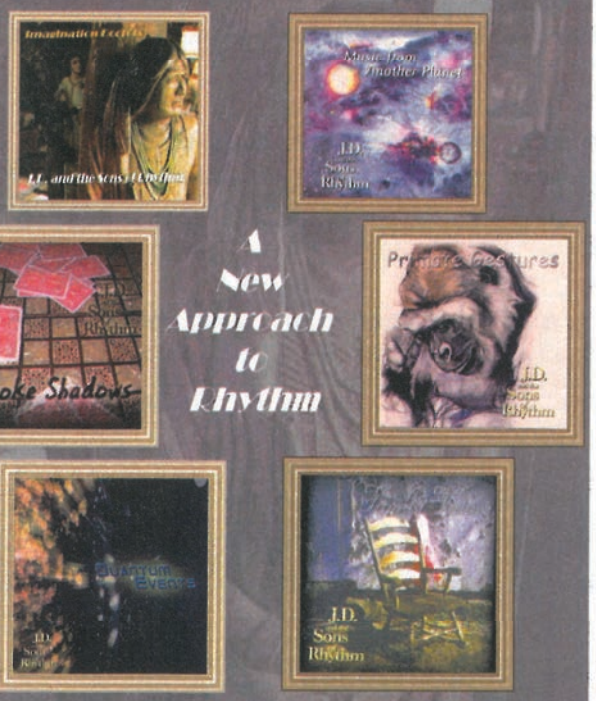
Finally we have a short piece of music that orchestrates all of the note values that we've been working on around the set.

Remember, repetition is the key to becoming a good reader. If you want to master this skill, you'll need to read tons of material—a lot more than can be printed in the confines of this article.

A few books that might help you sharpen your skills at reading 16th, 8th, and quarter notes on the drumset are *A Funky Primer* by Charles Dowd, *Realistic Rock* by Carmine Appice, *The Funky Beat* and *Future Sounds* by David Garibaldi, *Advanced Funk Studies* by Rick Latham, *The Commandments Of R&B Drumming* by Zoro, and *Jungle Drum 'N' Bass* by Johnny Rabb.

Next month we'll be covering triplets. See you then.

JD and the Sons of Rhythm



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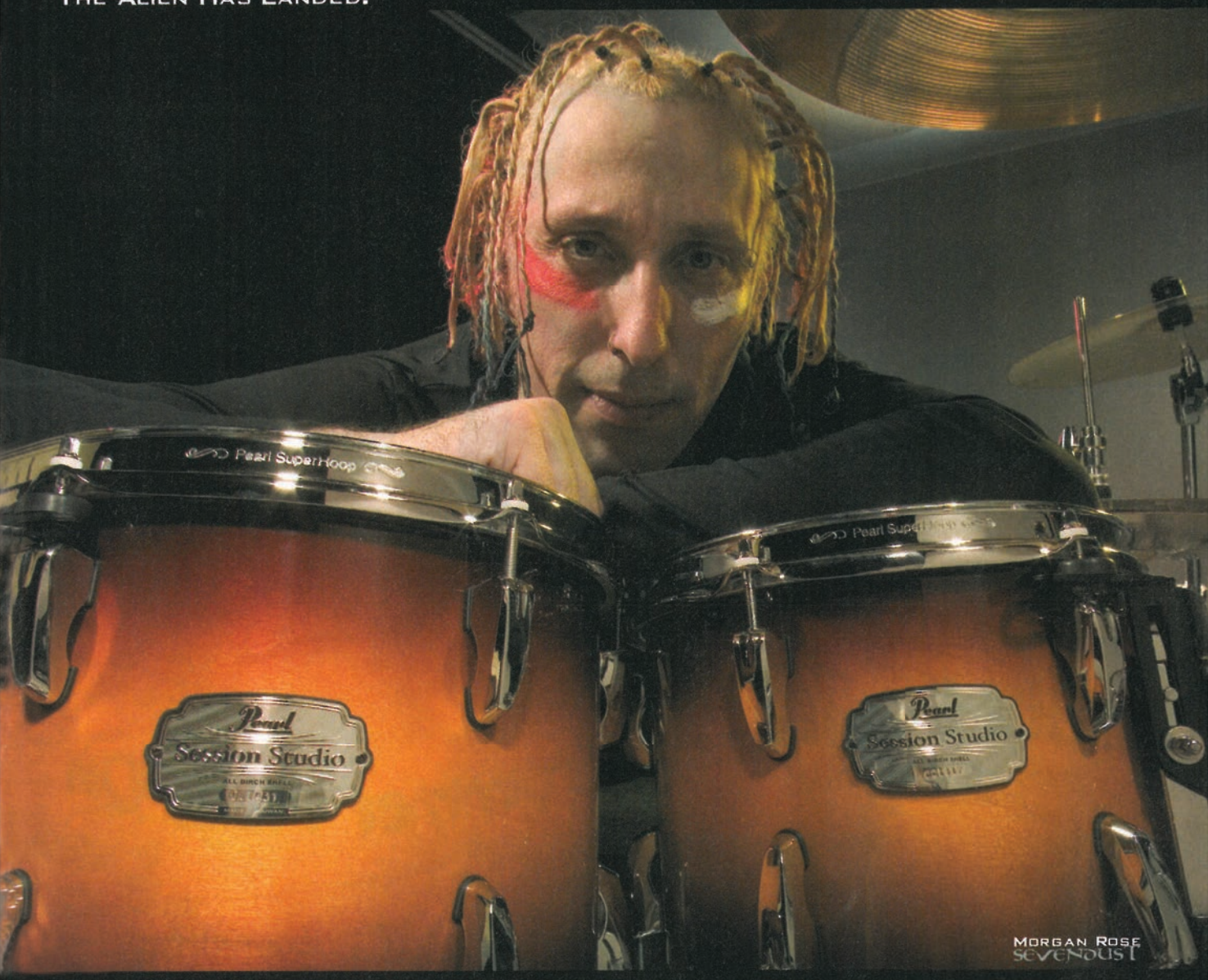

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Robertinho Silva

Brazil's Legendary Drummer Plays On

"I like to tell people that I am not a drummer. I am a rhythmist," says Robertinho Silva, one of Brazil's greatest musical exports. "I play drumset, but in Portugese there are different names for drummers and percussionists, so I don't think of myself as a drummer."

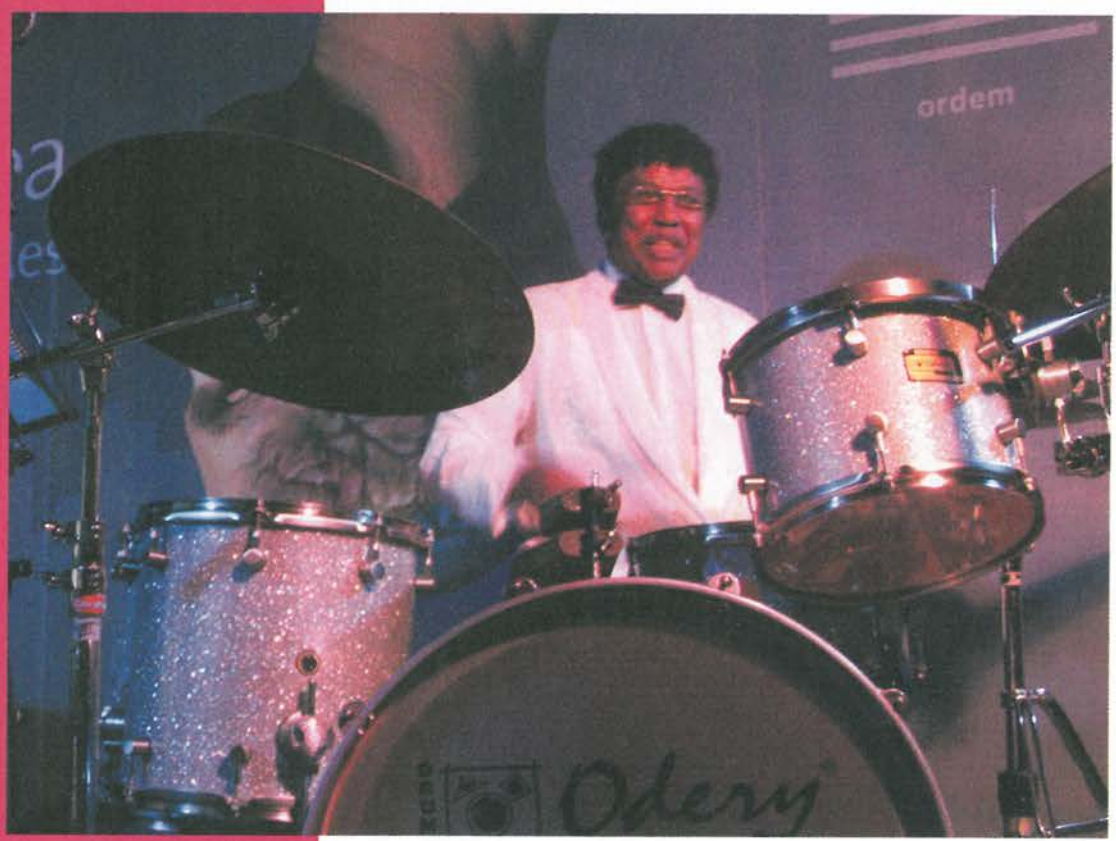
Many would beg to differ. Riding the mid-'70s explosion that found jazz musicians like Wayne Shorter, Cal Tjader, and George Duke heading to Rio de Janeiro for inspiration and fulfillment, Robertinho (who was often credited as Roberto back then) was *the* first-call Brazilian drummer. His flowing groove, adventurous sticking, and remarkable creativity propelled such classic recordings as Shorter's *Native Dancer*, Duke's *Brazilian Love Affair*, and Tjader's *Amazonas*. Flora Purim's *500 Miles High*, Sarah Vaughan's *I Love Brazil*, and Milton Nascimento's *Geraes* were other '70s albums that relied heavily on Silva's magical rhythmic grace.

by Ken Micallef

Silva's drumming is an amalgam of many sounds, influences, and disciplines. He grew up listening to bossa nova, American jazz, Caribbean popular music, and local military bands, as well as the more eclectic folk styles originating in Brazil's northeastern Bahia and Pernambuco regions. His heroes were previous Brazilian drumming innovators Edison Machado, Dom Um Romao, and Milton Banana. He also loves Tony Williams.

Silva's drumming is characterized by a light yet driving cymbal touch and chunky, soulful, and propulsive bass drum patterns based in numerous Brazilian forms. His playing perfectly captures the airy, blissful feeling that permeates the streets of Rio de Janeiro, with its jungles and mountains set in the heart of the city and its gleaming beaches populated by carefree natives. Silva is a study in the word "flow," whether he's elegantly banging cymbal bells and pushing a samba or tapping caxixi, agogo, apito, tamburin, and surdo.

A national treasure in Brazil, Silva has never stopped. His drumming is as vibrant, complex, soothing, and inspiring as ever, and has been discovered by a whole new wave of Brazilian musicians. Silva played on Bebel Gilberto's million-selling 2000 album, *Tanto Tempo*, as well as newer recordings by vocalists Celso Fonseca and Joyce, progressive bassist Ney Conceicao, samba-jazz saxophonist J.T. Meirelles, and Brazilian superstar Daniela Mercury, to name just a very few. With over sixty recording credits to his name, Silva maintains his crown as first-call session drummer in Brazil's music capitals of Rio de Janeiro and São Paolo, while he continues his twenty-five-year-plus gig with Milton Nascimento.



In 1981, Silva released his first solo album in the Música Popular Brasileira Contemporânea series simply titled *MPBC*, followed by 1984's *Bateria* and 1989's *Bodas de Prata*, followed again by two albums that are much easier to find in the US: *Speak No Evil* (1991) and *Shot On Goal* (1995). *MPBC* is a stone '70s affair with a cast of thousands prodding on Silva's zealous drumming, while *Speak No Evil* (which is somewhat marred by the stilted production) and particularly *Shot On Goal* are expansive journeys into Brazilian drumming *and* percussion, of which Silva is also a master.

"Americans play samba too heavy:
da-domb, da-domb, da-domb.
But in Rio we play it softer and more laid back."

In 1997, Silva opened the Centro de Percussão Alternativo (Alternative Center Of Percussion) in Rio de Janeiro. A colorful two-story building painted in bright green with a handful of rehearsal rooms and a very well-outfitted drum shop, this is where Silva instructs students from across town and across the globe (when not adhering to his hectic recording schedule). Dennis Chambers and Gary Chaffee have given clinics there, and Silva remains a fixture, his contagious energy and childlike enthusiasm a boon to all who attend. Rhythms examined include samba, bossa nova, and olodum, as well as baiao, maracatu, and forro from the northeast, and the Afro-Brazilian rhythms jexa, afoxe, jongo, and candomble.

Modern Drummer interviewed Robertinho Silva at his school on a bright summer Rio day as his twelve-female-strong drum troupe, As Levadas, practiced upstairs.

Robertinho's Rig

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2. 22" K ride
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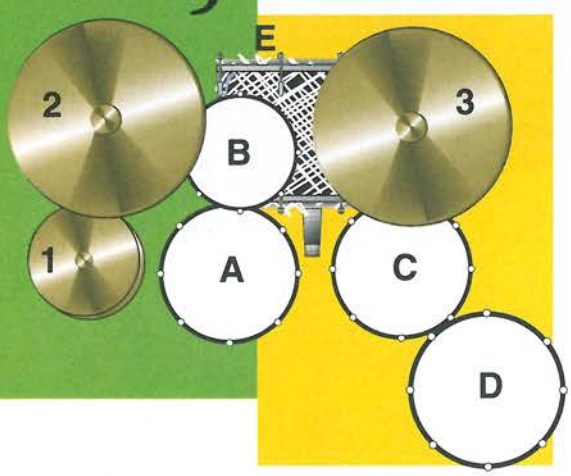

MD: On many of the albums that you played on in the '70s, your style sounds like Brazilian crossed with jazz and funk.

Robertinho: I discovered jazz on the radio, and no one ever told me it was called jazz. I would change the stations and realize this was music I wanted to play.

I'll tell you a story. Dennis Chambers played a clinic in São Paolo a few years ago. When they interviewed him later he said that all the drummers he heard in Brazil were playing like Americans, and that I was the only one who maintained a distinctly Brazilian style.

MD: Are young Brazilian drummers too influenced by American styles?

Robertinho: It's changing now, but it was like a fever for a while—all of these drummers embracing American fusion players. In São Paolo there was a drummer's convention and eighty percent of these young drummers wanted to play like Dave Weckl.

Gary Chaffee came to Brazil to give a course on all the basics of his method. He said at the end of the course, "I love

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Robertinho Silva

Brazilian percussion. Now I'm going to be your student and hear you guys play." But none of them knew how to play it—not even bossa nova!

MD: Were you required to read charts for Cal Tjader's *Amazonas* and Wayne Shorter's *Native Dancer*?

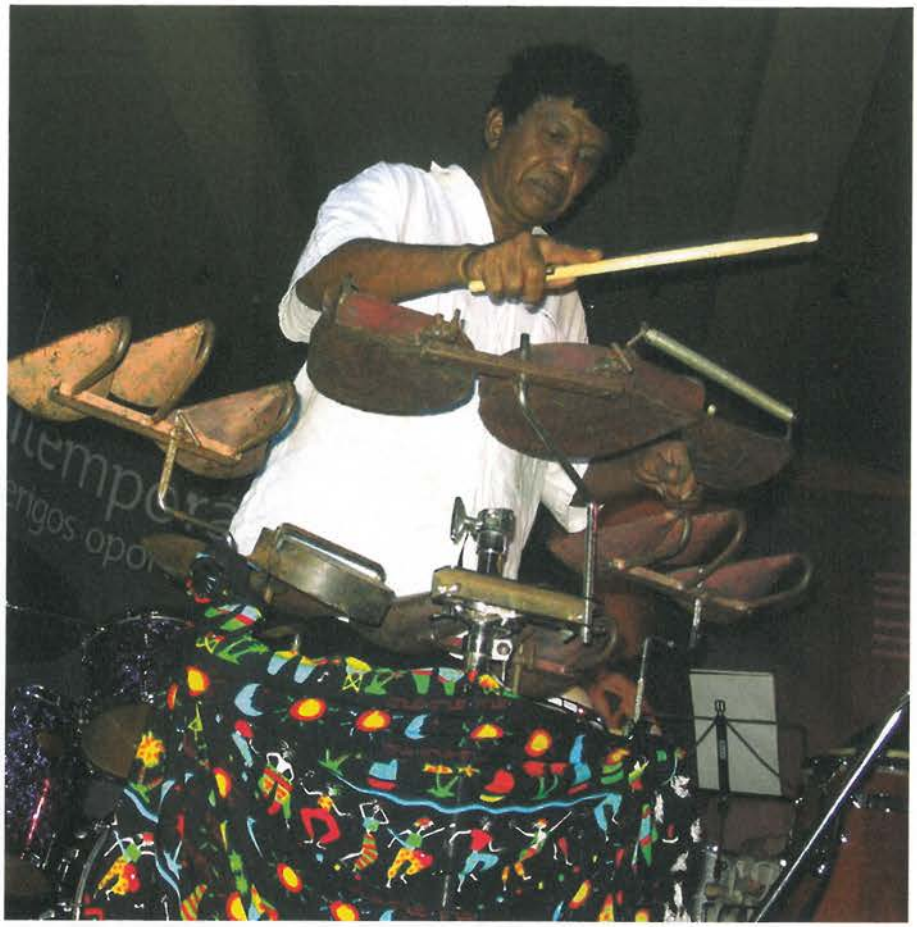
Robertinho: No. We didn't have to think about anything. That was the kind of music that I always listened to, so it was easy for me to play. It's my language. We didn't have a particular approach to recording the albums. It was just natural.

MD: Did you rehearse for *Native Dancer*?

Robertinho: When Wayne Shorter brought me to the US from Brazil, he was afraid that I would play like an American on the record. So he said, "Just play the same way that you do in Brazil." That's the only way I know how to play.

MD: Do you play as adventurously on your recent recordings [Bebel Gilberto, Ney Conceicao, Meirelles E Os Copa 5] as you did on the '70s recordings?

Robertinho: No, it's different now. On recent things, it's more elaborate and complicated. Back in the '70s, you didn't have all this technology, so you had to be cre-



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Silva Tracks

Recordings

Artist	Album
Robertinho Silva	Shot On Goal
Robertinho Silva	Speak No Evil
Robertinho Silva	MPBC (Music Popular Brazilian Contemporary)
Robertinho Silva	Bateria
Robertinho Silva	Bodas de Prata
Robertinho Silva	Jaqueda (with Ney Conceicao)
Flora Purim	500 Miles High
Wayne Shorter	Native Dancer
Cal Tjader	Amazonas
George Duke	Brazilian Love Affair
José Roberto Bertrami	Blue Wave/Dreams Are Real
José Roberto Bertrami	Things Are Different
Bebel Gilberto	Tanto Tempo
Moirelles E Os Copa	Samba Jazz!
Marcos Amorim Trio	Cris On The Farm
Celo Fonseca	Natural
Ravi	The Afro-Brazilian Project

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Gene Krupa	Gene Krupa Quartet	Gene Krupa
Gene Krupa	Sing, Sing, Sing	Gene Krupa
Benny Goodman	all	Gene Krupa
Miles Davis	all	Tony Williams
Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers	all	Art Blakey
Edison Machado	E Samba Novo	Edison Machado
Milton Banana	Milton Banana Trio	Milton Banana
Milton Banana	Sambas de Bossa	Milton Banana
Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66	Fool On The Hill	Dom Um Romao
Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66	Crystal Illusions	Dom Um Romao
Antonio Carlos Jobim	Wave	Dom Um Romao

ative and give it your all right there in that moment. Now when you record and you start to sweat the engineer says, "Stop, I'll edit that." For my next project I want to record something live without using technology.

MD: Why were the Cal Tjader and Wayne Shorter records special for you?

Robertinho: Wayne Shorter saw me in Rio and took me by the hand and said, "Come with me to the United States." We had such freedom on his sessions. There was a composition that he finished right in front of us. When I stayed at his house we lived in his kitchen the whole time.

MD: How did the music of Cal Tjader, Wayne Shorter, and Flora Purim inspire you?

Robertinho: It's music that I always listened to. Of course, when you get in the studio with people you've heard all your life, you get excited. It's a thrill. But I was never afraid to play, so even in a difficult situation I could invent something.

MD: Were there rehearsals for Cal Tjader's *Amazonas*? Some of those compositions sound very involved.

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Robertinho: No. We did it right there. George Duke did the arrangements. And we had no rehearsals for his record *Brazilian Love Affair*. I was really young then—I was thirty-six. Now I'm sixty-five.

MD: So you approached those sessions the same way as you would the music of any Brazilian artist?

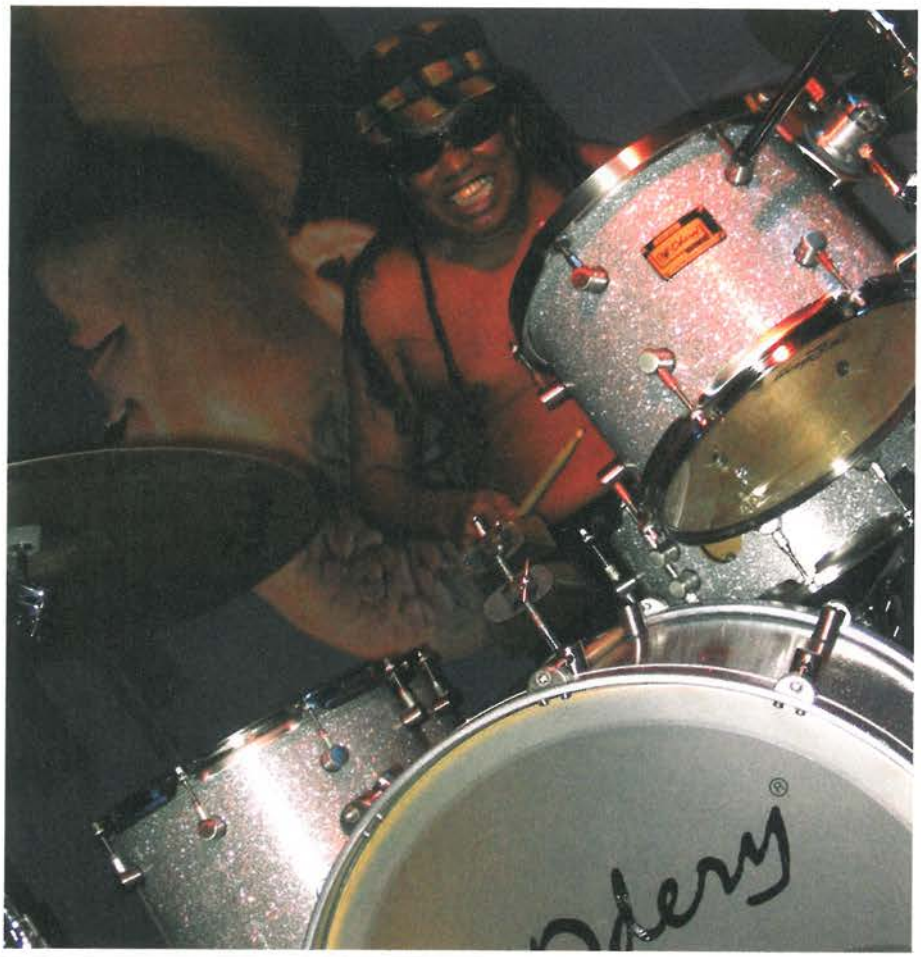
Robertinho: Yes. We had read so much about American musicians playing bossa nova, it was normal for everyone. I came to the conclusion early on that everyone is the same. I had my own style, so that's the way I played.

MD: How do you feel about playing with drum machines or sequences?

Robertinho: I don't mind playing with them, but I don't know how to work them! I turn the drum machine on, can't figure it out, so I go back to sleep. I am electronically impaired.

MD: Do the sessions you play in Rio use click tracks?

Robertinho: Yes. In general it bothers me, but that's the way it is. They call the bass player, the guitarist, the keyboardist, and the drummer and we all have to play with a click. There are little mistakes without the



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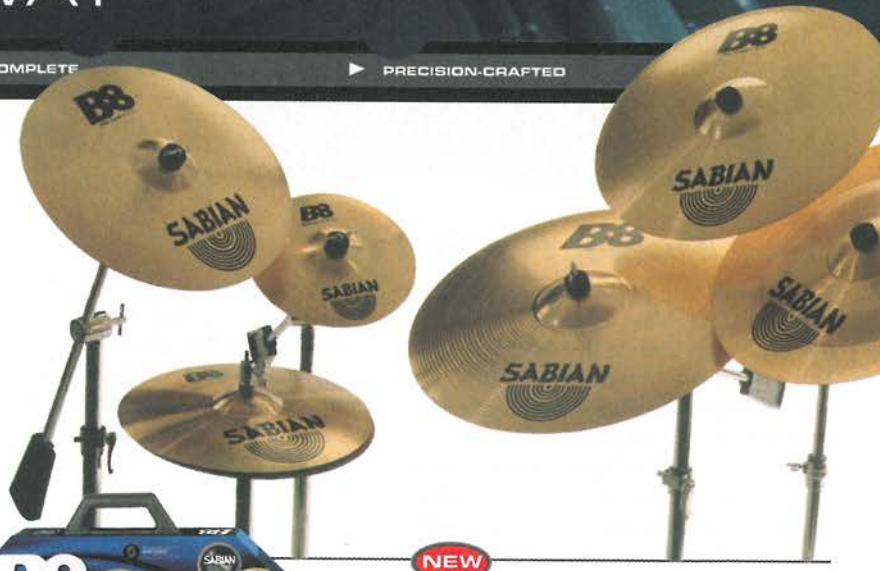

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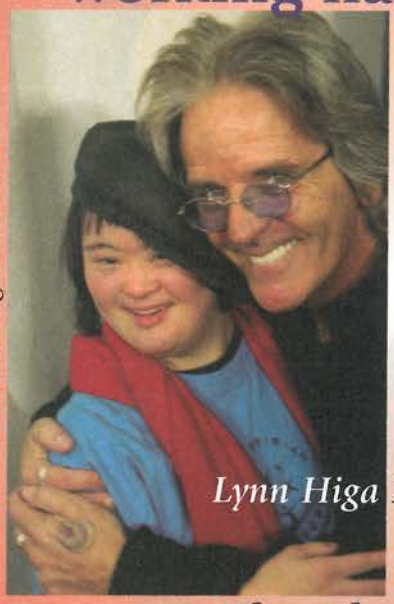

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Robertinho Silva

click and people mess up, which I like.

MD: Do you recommend that your students practice with a metronome?

Robertinho: Yes, of course. You have to develop good time and tempo. But I have a hard time playing *music* with one.

Understanding Brazilian Rhythms

MD: Your drum school in Rio de Janeiro is one of a kind.

Robertinho: For five years I had another percussion school here. I used to get all kinds of people from all over the world—Germans, Dutch, English, Swedish. But it was so far from Rio it made it hard. But I have many students, and more are coming.

MD: What rhythms are taught here at the school?

Robertinho: Afro-Brazilian rhythms that come from Bahia: olodum, maracatu, maculele, baiao—these are the most common rhythms from the northeast in Bahia and Pernambuco. We also teach soche, a rhythm that is related to reggae, and forro, which has all these rhythms incorporated in it. Forro is a dance. There are many different rhythms, but these are the most popular.

MD: Bossa nova comes from Rio, but where does samba come from?

Robertinho: Samba is from Rio as well. The other Brazilian states don't know how to play samba like the Cariocas [natives] do in Rio. There is samba de hauda in Bahia; it's a different kind of dance. The drumming is also a little different. Here in Rio, the way people play samba is influenced from Bahia because of the northeasterners who come here to live. A lot of people immigrate here. But most in the northeast don't know how to play samba. They don't know how to dance like they do in Rio.

MD: That's like jazz drummers in New York saying their Los Angeles counterparts can't play jazz.

Robertinho: Now I understand! When I lived in LA, people asked me, "Why don't you go to New York?" Now I understand. But I was afraid to live in New York. New York is so fast. LA is relaxed.

MD: Please talk about some of the bass drum variations in samba. In America, many drummers play a repeating dotted 8th and 16th feel on the bass drum.

Robertinho: I listened for many years to understand samba. Americans play it too

heavy—da-domb, da-domb, da-domb. But in Rio we play it softer and more laid back. Americans play samba too quickly, and they get ahead.

When I played with Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke, someone told me that in American jazz the drums play ahead of the bass—not speeding up, but placing the beat slightly ahead. But here in Brazil, it's the opposite. It's not in a Brazilian's blood to play jazz. They have to force themselves.

There's a big jazz festival held in São Paolo, and a few years ago a Brazilian drummer played with The Modern Jazz Quartet—but it sounded very forced. Milt Jackson threw his mallets up in the air and gave up. I won't tell you who the drummer is. I would get in trouble! He is very famous.

MD: What do Brazilian drummers at the school want to know?

Robertinho: They ask about rudiments, but I tell them I wasn't really interested in rudiments growing up. My evolution is by way of listening to many different drummers, Brazilian and American, and developing my own style out of that.

MD: Can anyone teach Brazilian drumming? And do many drummers leave Brazil to teach abroad?

Robertinho: I feel that people who go and live outside of Brazil lose their identity a little bit. You really need to live this music to stay on top of it. But drummers need to go to other countries outside of Brazil to export the music and keep it flowing. I also feel that people who haven't lived in Brazil who try to teach the rhythms give the wrong information.

MD: Your drumming breathes like the wind and the waves. How do you advise American drummers who want to capture that feeling?

Robertinho: That's a difficult question. When I would listen to Miles Davis on the radio, I would listen carefully for the details and I would imagine Philly Joe Jones playing. The first time I actually saw him play, with Bill Evans, it was exactly as I imagined it. Then I saw Elvin Jones and his breathing. His drumming was freer, and that's what I like. I also love Paul Motian.

The greatest percussion influence on me is Airto Moreira. Percussion was very traditional, but he came along and tore everything apart. I saw Airto's concept up close. He taught me and he told me that, when you take an instrument, you just have to make it happen. It doesn't matter what size it is. You make it happen.

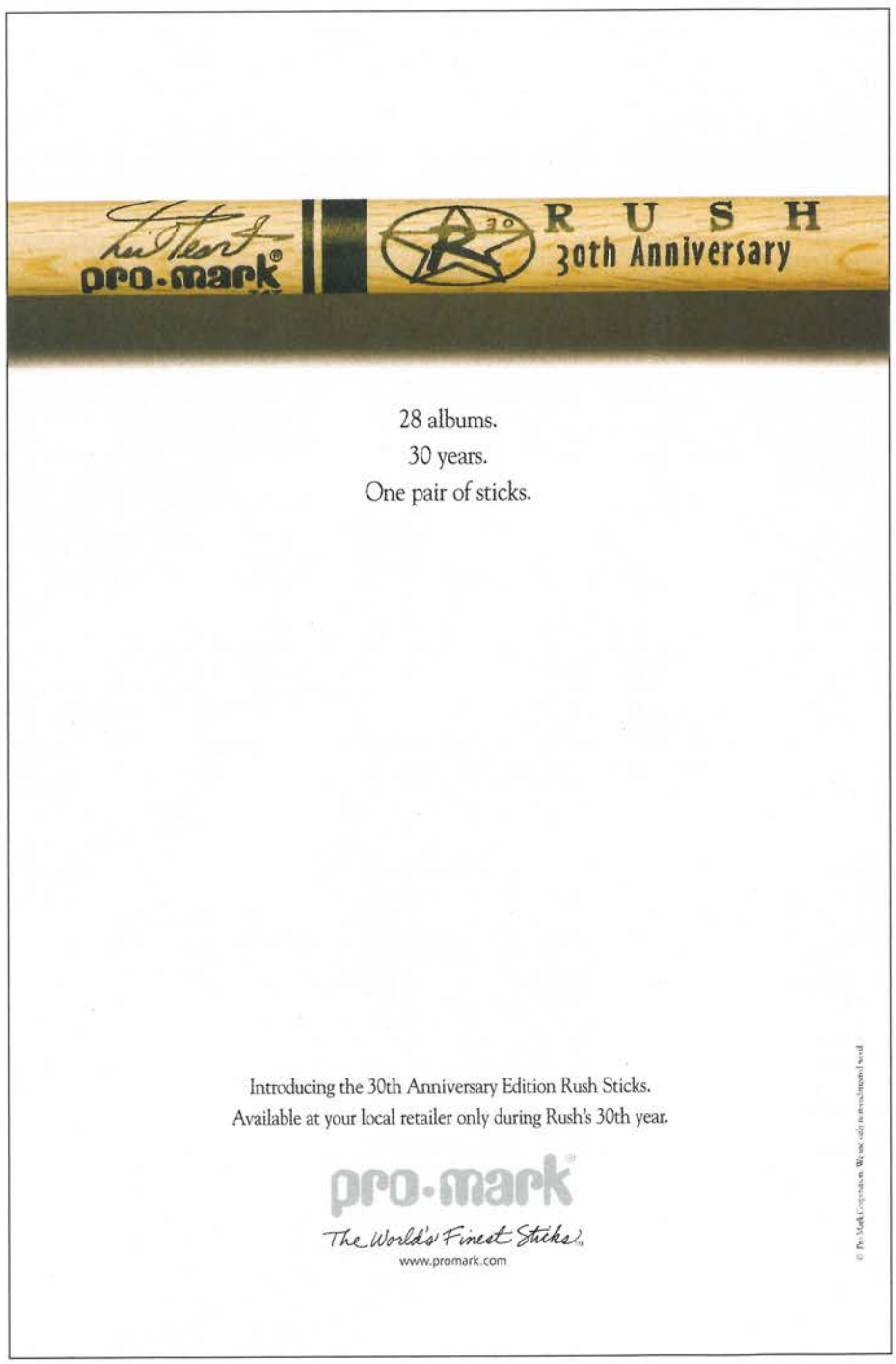
MD: But your drumming is funkier than Airto's, such as on the Cal Tjader record.

Robertinho: Well, Art Blakey was a major influence on me. So was Gene Krupa. I think those guys were very funky. So everything that they did with American music I try to do with Brazilian music.

MD: To get a similar feel, touch, and flow as you have, must a drummer come to Brazil?

Robertinho: It's good to come to Brazil. My teaching method is basic. [He plays a military sounding quarter note/triplet/quarter note pattern on the table with his hands.] I transform that into three different Brazilian rhythms—samba, baiao, maracatu. I convert that basic rudiment into those rhythms. I change the accents and make it into one of those three rhythms.

The first time Tony Williams came to Brazil, he gave a workshop and didn't talk



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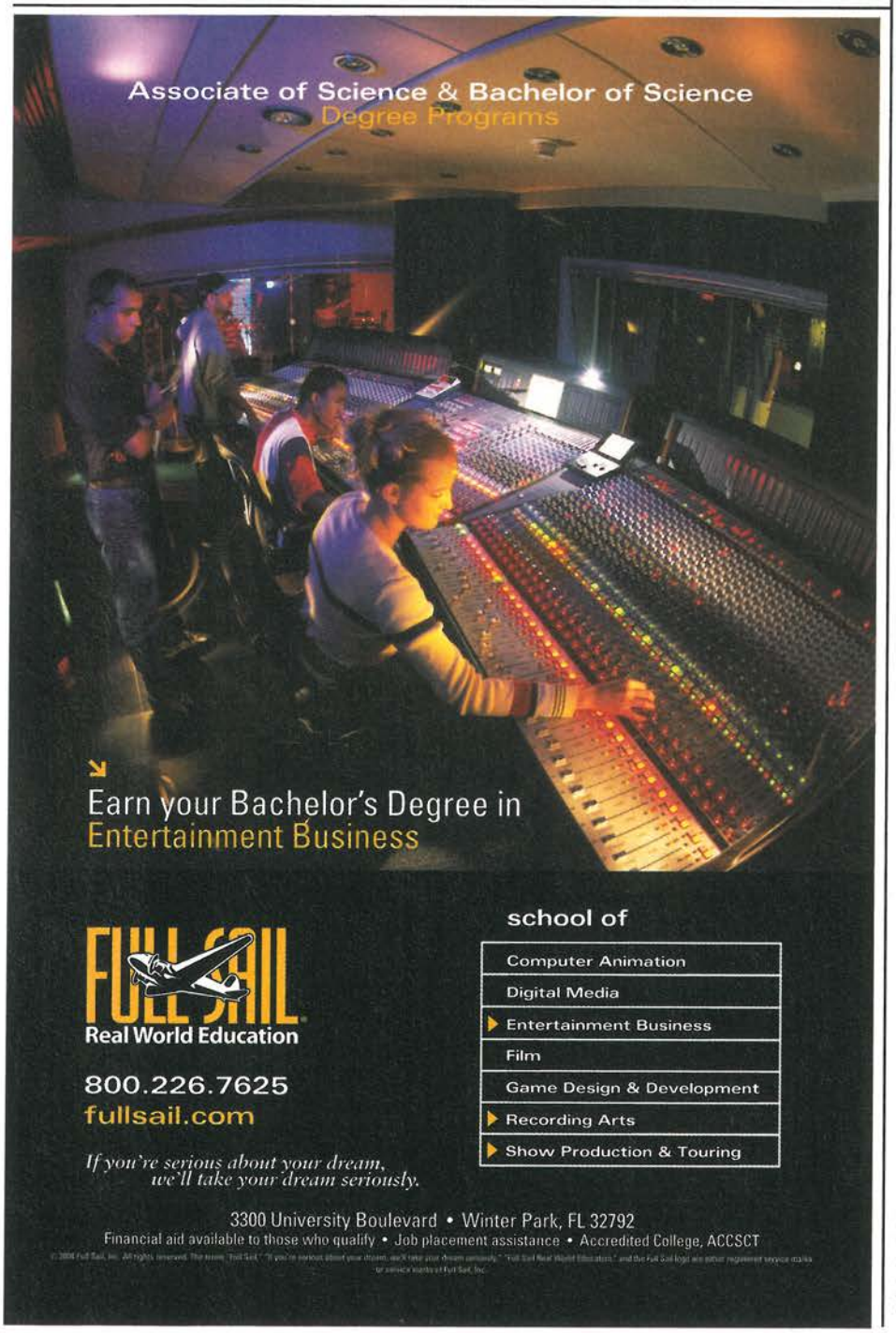
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Robertinho Silva

very much. One person asked him, "Have you studied?" Another smarter person asked him, "When you studied, how many rhythms did you play?" And he said, "One." "Why one?" "Because," he said, "you can develop one basic rhythm or rudiment into many different situations." You should study that same basic idea all day and take it in different directions.

Often, a student will look at one rhythm and then go to the next page. He'll say, "I want to do this one." But he doesn't become proficient with the first one. He doesn't really explore it to the fullest.

I'll play the rhythm slowly and then explain how it can be transformed. I explain how accents can change the rhythm. I'm writing my method book now. It will include things that I play, giving some examples of basic rhythms. It will be an advanced book. I have all these things written down.

MD: So you're passing the torch on to your students?

Robertinho: I *am* passing it on. Every time I do an article or go on TV, I talk about it.

MD: Who is your favorite current Brazilian drummer?

Robertinho: There are several. One in particular is Claudio Infante. He is very good and will represent Brazil very well. He is like Dennis Chambers.

Silva's History

MD: Your drumming is so rich with detail and it never sounds static, like when American drummers try to play Brazilian. Is that because your drumming is a mixture of many different Brazilian styles?

Robertinho: When I was very young, I was raised near a military base and there were all these different rhythms going on around me. I was raised in Rio, but there was a northeastern community nearby, so I heard forro, samba, chorinho, candomblé—which is the religious drumming—and the music of the military band.

I didn't know what drumming was. I would just hear these rhythms and I started to learn them. My parents were poor and didn't have money to buy a set of drums, so I played on household things. I would put a stick in the ground and put a plate on top of it, and that would be the cymbal. Or I would play a little stool for bongos.

MD: Many of the famous Brazilian com-

posers are from the northeast. What is it about that area that makes it so rich in music?

Robertinho: I think the greatest composers are from Rio de Janeiro, such as when the bossa nova and samba captured the entire world in 1962. Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil arrived in Rio [from Bahia in the northeast of Brazil] during the same time as bossa nova. They just broke away from the tradition. They did a new style of mixing everything—Brazilian rhythms with rock 'n' roll. It was totally new.

MD: Were you a fan of rock drumming in the '60s?

Robertinho: No. I was a jazz extremist. I didn't want to know about The Beatles. It was all Charlie Parker, Max Roach, and bossa nova. Later, after I heard Mitch Mitchell with Jimi Hendrix, I started to change my mind. Bud Shank playing Beatles tunes won me over. Their songs are beautiful.

MD: What did you practice growing up?

Robertinho: I played a lot of samba, bolero, cha cha cha, and baiao. In the dances that I played we didn't have as many of the northeastern rhythms at that time. We played more samba, some of the American music, rhumba, and Caribbean music. Those were the rhythms they wanted us to play for the dancers. There was a lot of prejudice against the northeastern music. It was considered hick music.

MD: Did you practice rolls and the rudiments?

Robertinho: I heard when I was young that if you couldn't read music you were nobody. So I looked for a teacher, and he told me that if you want to know drum technique, you have to study Gene Krupa. I was amazed when the teacher said that, because I was fascinated with the movie about Krupa's life [*The Gene Krupa Story*]. I used to go to the movies to see that film again and again. Then I found that teacher who told me I had to study my hero.

MD: So he taught you about Gene Krupa.

Robertinho: Yes, we studied from his book, *Gene Krupa Drum Method*. The teacher said, "Because you have a lot of talent, you can go through this book by yourself." He gave me a list of ways to learn it. I didn't have money to pay him, I was poor. But that's how I learned to read music.

MD: Was Edison Machado [of The Bossa 3, the first drummer to play the samba using cymbals on the drumset] a big influence on your drumming?

Robertinho: I listened to Edison Machado, Milton Banana, and Dom Um Romao a lot. I learned how to play bossa nova from their records. I learned samba from these older, more traditional players.

MD: Do you still practice?

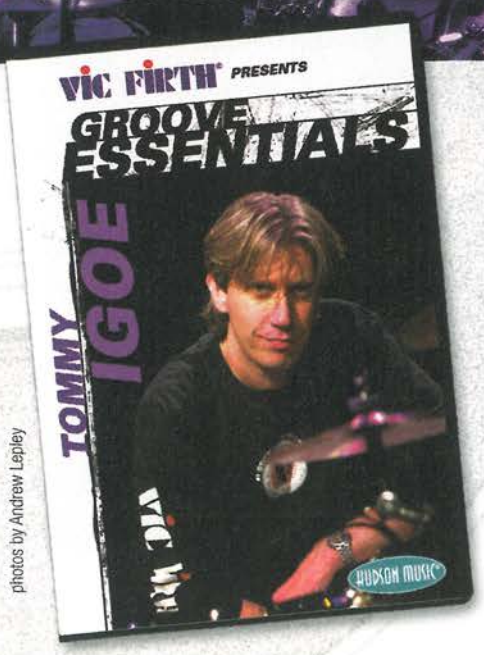
Robertinho: Not daily. But I still work out rhythms on the drums. In fact, I never practiced endless hours every day; that's not natural. I started playing drums when I was eighteen.

MD: That's very late.

Robertinho: I lived in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. It was very difficult. My father was a construction worker. I played hand drums and tambourine—not professionally, but with friends.

MD: What was your breakthrough gig?

Robertinho: My father had a small compound that he would rent to military people near our home. One day there was a great drummer who moved close to us. He was a very famous military drummer. So I invited him to eat at our home. We became friends.



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I would go to the compound, and the key was hanging next to the door where he kept his drums. I could go in and see all the parts of his drumset. I would practice on his drums without him knowing.

I would carry this drummer's instruments for him. Then one day, at one of the dances, I asked him if I could play. He asked, "Do you play drums?" I played Glenn Miller's "String Of Pearls." There was a saxophonist in the band who was putting together a quintet, and he liked what I had done, so he asked me to join his band. We started rehearsing and playing local clubs.

MD: What was your first major recording?

Robertinho: Project Three was the first group I recorded with. Their pianist went on to play with Azimuth. That was in 1967.

And To The Present Day

MD: Are you still working with Milton Nascimento?

Robertinho: Yes, for the past twenty-eight years. I'm on ninety percent of his albums.

MD: But you don't get to stretch on those albums.

Robertinho: Milton lets me have my musical freedom. From time to time he'll give me a song and say, "It's up to you. Play whatever you like."

MD: But it sounds like his music doesn't allow for a lot of freedom.

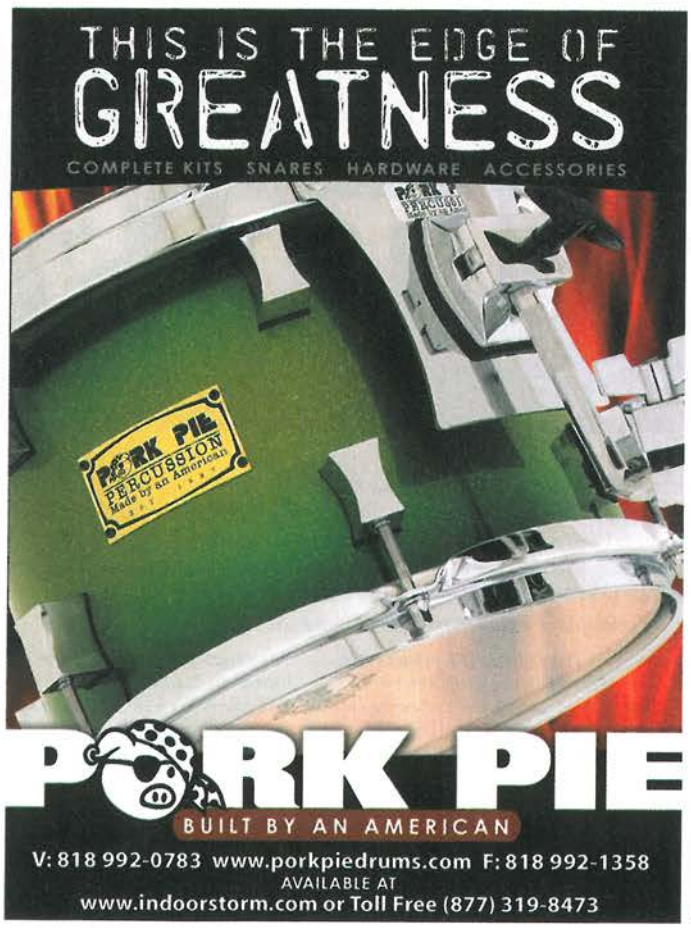
Robertinho: But I will change something on every show. He gives everyone liberty to change what they're playing. And Milton's music is its own style. I like it a lot.

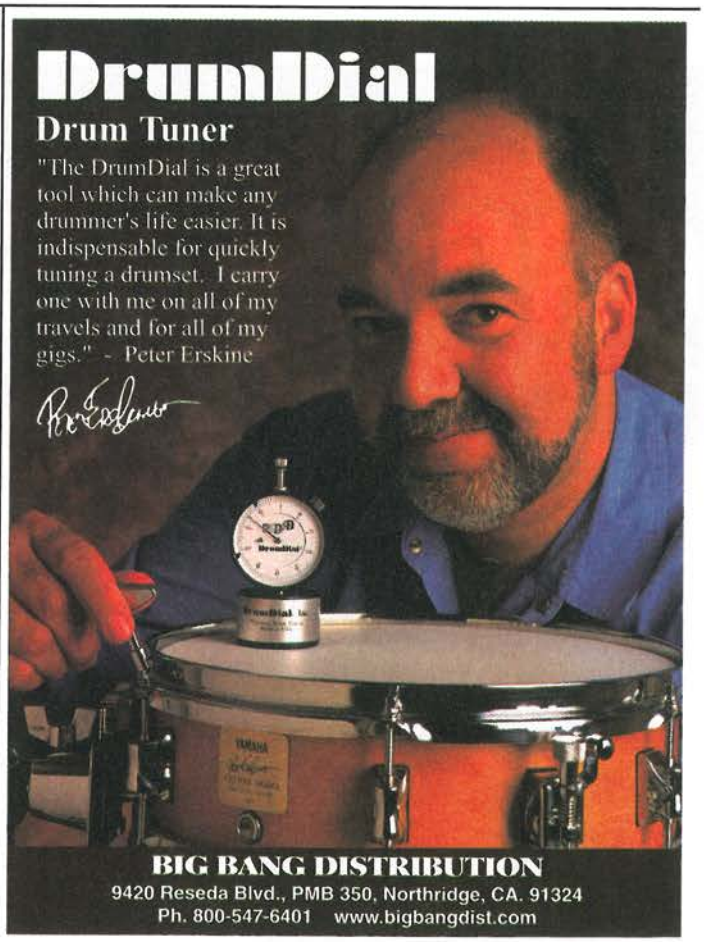
MD: What's next for you?

Robertinho: I'm finishing my method book, and everyone is asking me to do a video. I want to do one, but I haven't found funding for it yet. On it I'd want to teach and tell the story of how I became involved with the drums and the music. I'd want to show the places I've played. And I'd want to do something like Elvin Jones did with his *Different Drummer* film, where he told the story of his life.

MD: With your long career, I'm sure you would have a lot to demonstrate.

Robertinho: To have a Brazilian accent on the drums, you have to sit and listen to the music and the old-style drummers. Those players are all very old now and aren't playing. But I feel I represent that era. I'm in my sixties and still working, *and* playing with young people. To me, that's a triumph.

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The Art of Self-Promotion

Part 2: Promo Packs

by Michael Bettine

If you've ever contacted a club, promoter, or agent about yourself or your band, you've likely received the standard reply: "Send me a promo pack." At that point you may have asked yourself, "What exactly *is* a promo pack?"

A "promo pack" (short for "promotional package") is a combination of items designed to highlight the positive aspects of your band/music. As in a press release (see last month's article), it needs to adhere to the "who/what/when/where" formula. Then it adds a "why." Let's take a look at these separate elements.

A lot of people send out promo packs without clearly stating the reason for sending them. It may seem obvious to you, but it might not be obvious to the recipient.

Why

The first element should be a cover letter explaining the purpose of sending the promo pack. Are you looking for bookings, management, or a record deal? A lot of people send out promo packs without clearly stating the reason for sending them. It may seem obvious to you, but it might not be obvious to the recipient.

Perhaps you're sending your promo pack to someone you've already contacted, and thus is expecting it. In that case, your cover letter should remind them of your original contact and what you talked about, and explain that this package is what you promised to send to them.

Who

The most important item in your promo back is a biography, or bio for short. This is a résumé that introduces you or your band, and tells a bit of your history. If you are writing to promote yourself, focus on your musical accomplishments, schooling/training, career highlights, and any positive press that you've already received. If you're writing for a band, keep personal information for each member to a minimum and focus on the group as a whole. If absolutely necessary, you can provide a separate sheet with a one-paragraph bio for each bandmember.

People in the music business are busy, so keep the bio concise and easy to read in order to get and keep their attention. The rest of the promo pack will back up what is said in the bio with more in-depth information.

The first paragraph of the bio should introduce the band and give a little history. Here's an example:

> Boston-based FALLEN ANGEL has been together since 1999. In that time, the bandmembers (Jason Craft—vocals, Marty Jones—guitar, Pete Flynn—bass, Suzie Barrows—keyboards, and Ted Darling—drums) have steadily built up a following on the New England club circuit. Their progressive-metal sound has been gaining the attention of major clubs and promoters, as well as the ears of a small but growing European fan base.

The next paragraph can fill in some more information, like CD releases, major gigs, and press reaction:

> The band's debut CD, STARE AT THE SUN, has enjoyed brisk sales and heavy rotation on major rock stations WXYX and KNUR. Featuring nine original tracks, it has also been picked up by the East Coast Network for national distribution and has enjoyed European sales via the band's Web site. They have headlined at the Cactus Club in Boston, Geno's Rock House in Hartford, and the Upstage in Providence, and have opened for such acts as Smiling Jack, Buzzsaw, Energetic Realm, and England's Knifeblade.

Next, if you have them, add a few "pull quotes" from reviews or articles you have been featured in:

> "Intense and professional metal with a twist"—*Metal Mayhem Magazine*
>
> "Finely crafted music with a splendid stage show"—*East Coast Review*
>
> "STARE AT THE SUN is one of my Top-5 CDs of the year"—Ben Fisher, WXYZ radio

Always put your contact information at the bottom of every page you send out. This cannot be stressed enough. What good does it do to get someone interested in you or your band if you don't tell them how to contact you?

What

This is a page that answers the question "What about you/your band?" with more details. You can expand on the previous pull quotes by including the full text of the articles or reviews, as well as additional quotes. If you've been featured in major magazines or newspapers, you may want to include good-quality photocopies or scans of the best articles, and have a page of pull quotes from the rest. Keep this section to between one and three pages long.

The other part of "what" can be a CD. This can be your latest CD, or if you have more than one, a compilation of highlight tracks from all of them. I'll cover promo CDs at greater length in a future article.

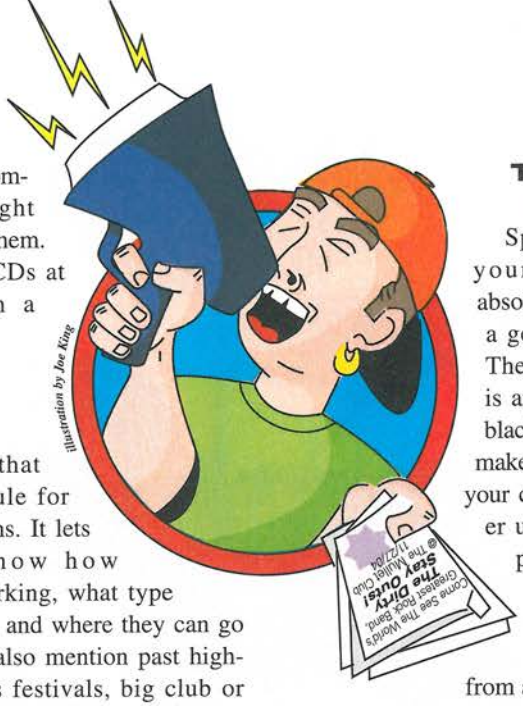

illustration by Joe King

When & Where

This is a page that gives your schedule for the next few months. It lets your recipients know how much you're working, what type of places you play, and where they can go see you. You can also mention past highlight gigs, such as festivals, big club or concert venues, radio or television appearances, and opening slots for major artists.

Make It Professional

Don't go out and buy the cheapest store-brand copying paper for your bio package. Look for heavier weight (24-36 lbs.) paper. You might want to consider special "brochure" paper, which gets good, crisp printing results. Also check for the brightness level of white paper. A higher brightness level translates to better legibility of your print. At the same time, colored papers can add a distinctive visual element to your total package.

And don't forget to have someone proofread and spellcheck everything you've written. You want to provide the most professional image you can.

The Visual Element

Speaking of image, your promo pack absolutely *must* include a good-quality photo. The industry standard is an 8x10 "glossy" in black & white. You *can* make copies yourself on your computer and printer using photo-type paper. But better-quality, more durable photos can be obtained from a commercial printer, often at a package price. Ask other bands/musicians—whose photos you like—for the name of their photographer and printer.

Follow Up

After you've put your promo pack together and sent it out, follow up a week or two later by phone and/or email to confirm that your addressee received the package. This also gives you the opportunity to answer any questions they may have, give them more details, get feedback from them, and most importantly, make personal contact. Additionally, you can invite them to a rehearsal or performance to hear and meet you.

Next time we'll look at mailing lists and newsletters. See you then!

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Gretsch Drums

All-American...And More

by Rick Van Horn

The last time *MD* visited the Gretsch drum factory (in the May 1984 issue), it was located in DeQueen, Arkansas. It was owned by a man named Charlie Roy, who had just purchased it from the Baldwin Piano Company a couple of years before. No one actually named "Gretsch" had anything to do with it.

"We're dealing with an instrument that's played by hand, and we're making it by hand."
—Fred Gretsch

But a year later the company once again became the namesake of its owner, when it was purchased by Fred W. Gretsch. The current Mr. Gretsch is the son of William Gretsch and the nephew of Fred Gretsch Jr., who between them ran the operation from 1942 until its sale to Baldwin in 1967. Fred Jr. and William were the sons of Fred Gretsch Sr., who presided over the developmental years of the company (1895-1942) and the creation of many of its innovations. Fred Sr. was the son of Friederich Gretsch, an immigrant from Germany who set up a music business in the US in 1883, and in so doing established a musical dynasty.

In The Family Business

As a child in the early 1950s, Fred W. Gretsch worked part-time in the Gretsch factory at 60 Broadway in Brooklyn, New York. He helped to assemble drum parts, worked as an office boy, and eventually became involved with making drums. He went to work for the company full-time in 1965, and remained until 1968. He then struck out on his own and became a successful musical-instrument wholesaler.

Shortly after bringing the Gretsch company back into family ownership in 1985, Fred Gretsch moved manufacturing operations to Ridgeland, South Carolina. It's just across the river from Savannah, Georgia, where the offices of Fred Gretsch Enterprises are located. Fred operates that business with his wife, Dinah, and his daughter, Lena Thomas.

Fred takes the heritage of the company that bears his name very seriously. A portrait of his grandfather has a prominent place in the office. Photos of the Brooklyn factory, along with historic drum memorabilia, decorate the shelves. Fred is particularly proud of the fact that at 121 years old, the Gretsch company can lay claim to the title of "oldest continuously operating American drum maker." He enjoys displaying vintage catalogs and patent documents that record the company's historic innovations, including the multi-ply drumshell, double-tension drums, and the use of die-cast hoops.

Doing Things The Historic Way

Fred Gretsch glories in the fact that his company uses old methods, old machinery, and in some cases old materials in order to create its products. His personal take on it is, "You can buy a new car, which is very nice. Or you can buy a '55 Chevy, which is a classic. And the reason it's a classic is because of the way it was built. If someone made that same car today using 'modern' methods...well, it wouldn't *be* the same car. At our South Carolina factory, we make Gretsch custom drums the '55 Chevy way."

Building For Sound

Gretsch shells are cut, sanded, and given their edges on the same machinery that was used twenty years ago or more. "Of course, we've replaced parts that have worn out," Fred says, laughing. "We sand both the inside and outside surfaces of the shell. Even a 'smooth' shell has pores and veins in the wood. Our sanding process minimizes that, and our finishing process will complement it. Our goal is to come out with a drum that's perfect to the ear...that sounds great. As far as appearance, we want it to be perfect to the naked eye. We're dealing with an instrument that's played by hand, and we're *making* it by hand."

Shell Questions

When one of Gretsch's largest shell providers ceased operations in 2003, people wondered how Gretsch would be affected by the change. Fred explains the situation with a little history lesson.

"When Elvis and other early rock artists helped ignite the drum business in the late 1950s," says Fred, "we needed to increase production at our Brooklyn factory. But there wasn't enough room. So we trained outside vendors to build shells to our specifications, using our molds. We've continued that system over the years, employing these outside partners to do various manufacturing processes at remote locations.

"We never advertised the partners we worked with," Fred continues, "because they didn't build their own brand of shells. They built *Gretsch* shells, using Gretsch molds and techniques. As our partners have changed or as we've needed more production, we've simply moved our molds around. The shell specs have remained unchanged for fifty years.

"It's also important to remember that the shell is just one ingredient of the full Gretsch process," Fred adds. "We could take the same shell and put a polyurethane finish on it, or eliminate the silver sealer, or use automated manufacturing—and we'd have a different drum."

Drum Finishing

In the Gretsch finishing area, technicians carefully mix stains to match a dozen master colors. Stains are wiped on the drumshells by hand, and are carefully built up to match the color of the master sample. Then each shell goes through an extensive sequence of sanding, first and second lacquering, level sanding, a third lacquering, more sanding, a fourth lacquering, more sanding, fifth and sixth lacquering, and wet sanding. (The famous Tony Williams opaque yellow finish involves a similar sequence, but includes white primer and yellow paint instead of stain.) After the final wet sanding, all shells

Great Gretsch Players Of Yesterday And Today

Vinnie Colaiuta

Stanton Moore
(Galactic)

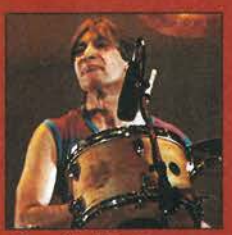
Phil Collins

Bill Stewart

Rob Bourdin
(Linkin Park)

Mike Marsh
(Dashboard Confessional)

Elvin Jones


Charlie Watts
(The Rolling Stones)

Art Blakey

Chick Webb

Gretsch Gear

USA Custom

USA Custom drums feature the 6-ply maple shell design that has been a major component of Gretsch drums for over fifty years. All drums are given a 30° bearing edge said to maximize the warmth of the maple and focus the tone and projection of the shell. All shells are sealed on their interiors with the specially formulated silver sealer used since the 1960s.

Metal parts are die-cast from heavy-duty zinc alloy. After casting, the parts are plated with copper, nickel, and chrome, then polished. Toms and snare drums are fitted with die-cast hoops. All mounted toms include GTS suspension systems, and 8", 10", and 12" toms feature Gretsch's unique five-lug configuration.

Drums are available in nitrocellulose lacquer finish in a wide variety of standard and custom colors, or with Nitron covered finishes. All drums are fitted with Permatone heads manufactured to Gretsch's specifications.

USA Custom Signature

USA Custom Signature kits feature unique configurations and finishes. The Harvey Mason Signature kit shown here features a 22x22 bass drum, 8x10, 8x12, and 8x13 rack toms, 14x14 and 14x15 suspended floor toms, and a 5x14 eight-lug snare drum. Drums feature a Satin Ebony finish complemented with gunmetal plated hardware. Additional sizes and configurations are available for both signature series.

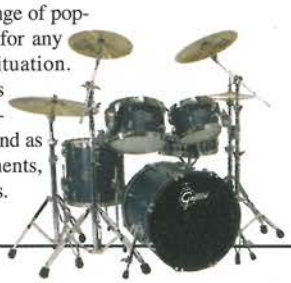
The Vinnie Colaiuta Signature kit features an 18x22 bass drum, 7x10 and 8x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms with legs, and a 5x14 eight-lug snare. Drums are finished in a White Wash gloss lacquer accented with black powder-coated hardware.

USA Custom Historic Re-Creation Sets

Gretsch first offered modern re-creations of their historic kits in 2003, with the 120th Anniversary LTD round-badge '60s jazz kit. For 2004 they have re-created the kit that was so prevalent in the recording studios during the 1970s. The '70s LTD kit offers a 12"/16"/22" configuration. Its walnut finish differs from the one offered on today's USA Custom drums, but matches exactly the finish of original '70s kits.

USA Maple

The most affordable of Gretsch's American-made line offers a focused range of popular sizes suitable for any type of playing situation. USA Maple drums are available in pre-configured setups and as individual components, in five satin finishes.



Renown Maple

Gretsch drum series made overseas begin at the top with Renown Maple. They're fitted with many features from the USA Custom series, including five-lug tuning on 8", 10", and 12" toms, 30° bearing edges on toms and bass drums, die-cast hoops and GTS suspension mounts on mounted toms, and Gretsch's internal silver sealer. All drums feature 100% American rock maple shells. Bass drums and toms are 6-ply; snare drums are 10-ply with 45° bearing edges. Kits are available in eight high-gloss finishes, as well as Yellow Oyster and Turquoise Oyster Nitron covered finishes. They come fitted with professional Evans drumheads.

Catalina Birch

Catalina Birch drums are designed to set a new standard for semi-professional sets. They feature 6-ply birch shells with 45° bearing edges, five-lug tuning on 8", 10", and 12" toms, GTS suspension rack on toms, matching-finish birch bass drum hoops, single-ply clear heads on toms, coated snare heads, and pre-muffled bass drum heads. Kits are available in three configurations and four high-gloss wood-grain colors.

Catalina Club

With two small configurations (including 16x16 and 16x18 bass drums) and classic-styled features, the Catalina Club can serve as a backup kit, a portable performance kit, or a kit for a younger, smaller player. Drums feature 6-ply mahogany shells, 30° bearing edges, five-lug tuning on 8", 10", and 12" toms, GTS suspension mounts on rack toms, and retro center-mounted lugs. Three vintage Nitron finishes are available.

Blackhawk

Blackhawk EX with Ebony Swirl Nitron covered finish

The Blackhawk entry-level series offers features found on more expensive drums. Standard Blackhawk drums feature 6-ply mahogany shells with 30° bearing edges, five-lug tuning on 8", 10", and 12" toms, 12.7-mm mounts on all toms, and low-mass die-cast lugs. Kits are offered in two standard configurations and three Nitron covered finishes. A full range of add-ons is available.

Recently introduced Blackhawk EX kits feature modern Nitron finishes and a mini suspension system on all mounted toms.

Snare Drums

New Classic snares (shown here) feature a classic tube lug design with three different shell materials to choose from. Drums are available in 4x14 and 5x14 thin-shell models, 5½x14 and 6½x14 thick-

shell maple models featuring the classic Gretsch maple shell, and 5x14 and 6½x14 Black Brass models with gold accented hardware. The drums feature Nickel Drumworks throw-offs, Gretsch Permatone heads, and embossed New Classic logo badges that note the year of production.

The 4160 Chrome Over Brass snare drum features a 5x14 Chrome Over Brass shell with original center ridge, eight double-ended lugs, die-cast hoops, and Gretsch's Lighting throw-off and Stop Sign badge design.

Chrome Over Brass snare drum

USA Custom snares are available with Gretsch maple and Black Brass shells. Signature models include Vinnie Colaiuta snares in wood and brass, and a Harvey Mason wood snare.

Other snare models include USA Maple, Free-Floating Maple (all wood), Free Floating Maple-Brass-Maple (maple with brass center insert), 10-ply Maple, 10-ply Exotix Maple, Hammered Brass, Black Chrome Steel, Mighty Mini Wood (8" to 13", basswood), and Mighty Mini Steel (8" to 13", steel).

Hardware

Gretsch offers Gibraltar hardware and drum-rack packages in conjunction with their kits. These include a wide variety of cymbal and tom stands, hi-hats, and bass drum pedals.

Also available are various Gretsch tom holders, tom arms, and tom stands, all of which feature 12.7-mm knurled arms with memory locks to fit the tom brackets that come standard on all levels of Gretsch drums.

Accessories

Accessories from Gretsch include a selection of Vintage drumsticks "based on the classic original designs of yesteryear." All feature wood tips and are hand-dipped in a protective lacquer.

Also available are heavy-duty drum bags in black with classic orange trim and embroidered Gretsch logos.

are carefully buffed to create the depth and luster for which Gretsch finishes are noted.

The factory frequently gets orders for new drums to match existing kits that are twenty or more years old. This poses a unique problem. "The color of any drum is affected by how much ultra-violet light it's been exposed to over the years," Fred explains. "We may need to match a color that's no longer what it was when the drum was new. That's a challenge that we work hard at. We can't please all of the people all of the time, but we sure try."

While the industry standard for high-gloss drum finishes is polyurethane, Gretsch has used nitrocellulose lacquer for generations. Why the difference? "The cosmetic-conscious marketplace today wants everything flawless and shiny," Fred responds. "That may *look* good, but it just doesn't *sound* as good. Our six-coat nitrocellulose lacquer finish is a very slow process. The time in between each application of color or lacquer is as important as the application itself. The depth of the finish depends on the lacquer seeping into the shell—as opposed to polyurethane, which more or less sits on top of the shell's surface."

Drums are sprayed by hand in a small spray booth. In addition to paint and lacquer layers, the paint sprayers are involved in the creation of Duco finishes, whose 1940s "retro" look features black or blue horizontal stripes above and below a central stripe of silver. The finish is created by spraying the exterior of the shell with the silver sealer used on the insides of all Gretsch shells, after which the operator carefully lays in the color for the stripes a few centimeters at a time.

Gretsch also offers dozens of "Nitron" covered finishes. "Our Nitron sets," says Fred, "are made with sheets of material that are 54" long. A bass drum takes two pieces, so it has two seams toward the bottom. An 18" floor tom is done the same way. People today expect things to be seamless and flawless. They see something like this and say, 'There's something wrong! There are two seams on that drum.' But there's no way to make it with one seam unless you're using a continuous roll of covering material from some production house. We build drums the '55 Chevy way, with two seams."

The Silver Sealer

The famous silver sealer used on the inside of Gretsch shells dates back to the Brooklyn factory days. Some drummers wonder whether it has a genuine acoustic purpose or is just there to cover imperfections in the wood.

"The sealer is applied as the last step before the drum goes out of the finish room," Fred responds. "It's a very light formulation that doesn't hide anything. In fact, we can't put it on unless we carefully sand the inside of the shell first. Otherwise it will *enhance* any imperfections. As far as why we put it on and what it does acoustically, that's a secret we want to keep. But I will say that a Gretsch drum absolutely would not sound the same without it."

Drum Production

Gretsch USA Custom shells are carefully sanded inside and out.

Stains are applied by hand in order to match master samples.

Shells are drilled on machinery that's been in use for generations.

A final buffing step gives Gretsch shells their deep luster.

Each USA Custom drum is fitted with Gretsch's heavy die-cast lugs, and will later receive the manufacturer's signature die-cast hoops.

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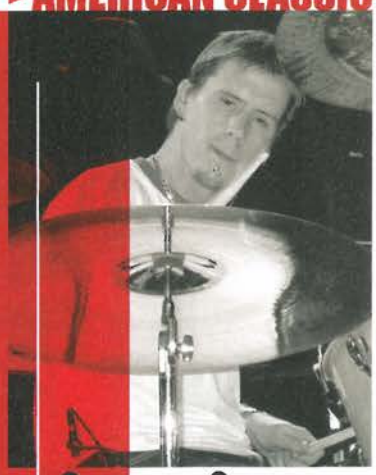

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Drilling And Quality Control

After being lacquered or covered, shells are drilled on the same multiple-bit drill press that was used in Brooklyn in the 1950s. "I've thought about getting a computer to do it," says Fred, "but the system we use retains the human element, which we think is important. It's one more set of eyes to make an extra check of all the steps that have come before. A computer can't do that. If a technician notices any sort of flaw, that drum is sent back to the appropriate point to be reworked. No drums leave this building until we're sure they're up to our standards."

Historic Features

USA Maple drums get the standard internal label that has been used since the mid-1970s. But in 2002 the company switched over to the "Gretsch American" label for their other models, in tribute to Fred Gretsch Sr., who developed the ply drum shell in 1927. "That's a Gretsch first that became a standard of the industry," says grandson Fred W. Gretsch, proudly. "Another signature characteristic is die-cast hoops. We introduced them on drums in 1938, and we've used them ever since."

One historic feature that's no longer standard on Gretsch drums is the adjustable internal mufflers for the top and bottom heads of tom-toms. Modern tuning trends led Gretsch to stop installing these mufflers a few years ago. However, as Fred puts it, "If you want 'em, you can get 'em. That's something we're going to venture out with: historically accurate features that aren't in the current price list."

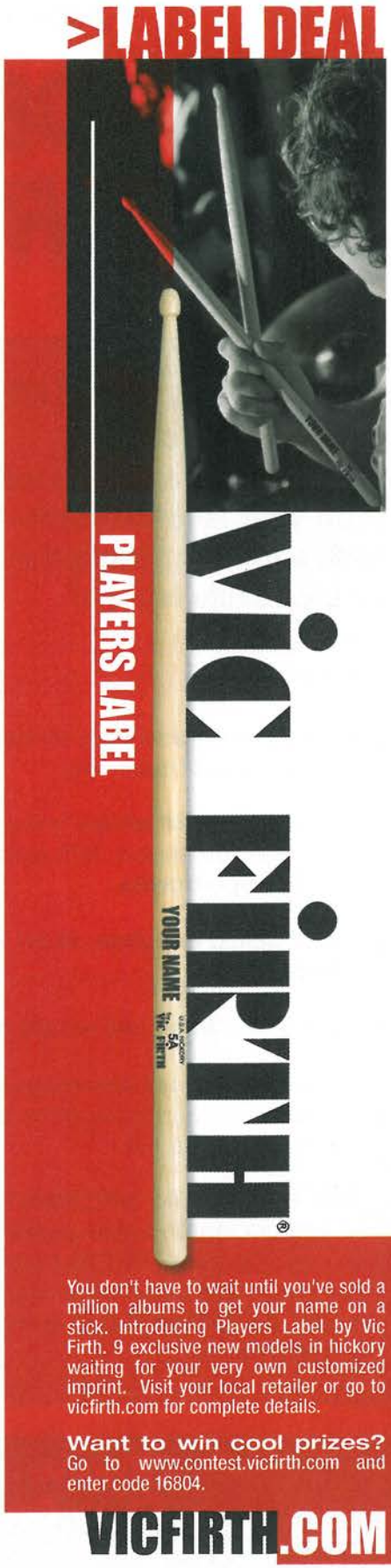
The Gretsch/Kaman Partnership

In 2000, Gretsch entered into an exclusive distribution partnership with Kaman Music Corporation. Kaman had been looking for a name-brand drum line since their Legend drum program was discontinued a few years earlier. Meanwhile, Fred Gretsch was seeking better distribution and the opportunity to expand the Gretsch line to offer drums from entry level to high end. Kaman had the necessary distribution and marketing strength to make that happen. This partnership has led to expansion of the Gretsch drum line, which now includes a full range of kits made overseas in addition to those made in America.

Gretsch's effort to reach a wider market has been aided by the fact that along with legendary drummers like Vinnie Colaiuta, Harvey Mason, Phil Collins, and Charlie Watts, the company has many new, younger endorsers. These include Brad Wilk (Audioslave), Rob Bourdon (Linkin Park), Stan Frazier (Sugar Ray), Mike Marsh (Dashboard Confessional), and Stanton Moore (Galactic), as well as renowned jazz drummers Bill Stewart and Cindy Blackman.

Gretsch's partnership with Kaman also

Kaman's Tim O'Neal (at left) and Fred Gretsch flank production manager Paul Cooper.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Developed by intuitech marketing

allows the company to offer its recording and custom level drums with Kaman's Gibraltar line of stands, mounts, and pedals. Says Fred, "Between Gretsch drums and Gibraltar hardware, we think our offerings are as good as you can get."

Improved Delivery

Few drum companies have enjoyed the fanatical drummer support that Gretsch has. However, over the years, delivery time for a Gretsch kit has been... well...lengthy. Kaman's reputation as a distributor, on the other hand, is based largely on rapid delivery. Kaman is in control of production of Gretsch models made overseas. But has their partnership with Gretsch had any influence on production at the Ridgeland plant?

"Absolutely," replies Tim O'Neal, who leads Kaman's Gretsch sales team. "But not in the sense of changing how the drums are constructed. That's the last thing we'd want to do. But there were some aspects of the production process that we could help to improve. For example, orders for kits used to come in to the factory one at a time, and the parts for those kits would be purchased at that point. When Kaman's sales force generated more orders, it allowed the factory to buy significant quantities of parts in one batch. That facilitated faster production.

"The next thing we went to," Tim continues, "was a 'shell pack' idea for the USA Custom line. We pull a certain selection of shell sizes in advance, and we put a limited range of colors on them. We get them to the point where we can complete the finishing process in about five production days, as opposed to the twenty or thirty it would take from scratch. So by having parts in stock, and having certain sizes and colors available

The Vinyard

A large section of the Gretsch plant in Ridgeland, South Carolina holds shelves full of drums in various stages of construction, along with raw shells and stacks of wood veneer. This area is known as "The Vinyard." Its contents have been in the building since late 1985, when they were moved from the previous Gretsch factory in DeQueen, Arkansas. The collection includes completed and partially completed drums from the late 1960s up to the early '90s, all of which have been sitting in a protected environment since the day they were made. Many feature special colors or wood veneers; others are discontinued sizes or model styles.

Fred Gretsch in The Vinyard

"We know from people who have visited here and seen The Vinyard that it's a very interesting and musically powerful collection," says Fred Gretsch. "Right now we're using it as a resource for our own historical purposes, helping us to develop our authentic re-creation sets. And a few of our artists have had drums made from The Vinyard's inventory. As a matter of fact, it was Vinnie Colaiuta who dubbed the collection 'The Vinyard' in the first place."

Kaman's Tim O'Neal comments, "The treasure that we have here is three-fold. First, there are thousands of Gretsch kits in use around the world. With the stock we have, the owners of those kits could get additional drums pretty much from the era in which their kit was originally made. That's not an option commonly found on the market today.

"Second, the stock of The Vinyard includes enough drums of certain colors to allow us to create complete sets, or to put new finishes on otherwise similar shells to create a new set. Cindy Blackman wanted a kit from a specific time period. We found the appropriate shells, she picked a finish, and we made her a brand-new set of thirty-year-old drums.

"The last potential of The Vinyard is its stock of raw shells and veneers," Tim concludes. "One of the most important factors of a drumshell is the stability of the wood, and that can only be achieved in time. The Vinyard may offer us the opportunity to build a very select group of limited-edition vintage models. We might only be able to build twenty of a given size. But that will make the drums all the more collectible for the future."

Slingerland And Leedy, Too

Another large storage area in the Ridgeland plant holds vintage Slingerland parts—shells, hoops, logo heads, and hardware—left over from the mid-1980s, when Fred Gretsch owned the Slingerland company. "We sold the manufacturing rights and the Slingerland name to Gibson in the mid-1990s," says Fred. "But they were only interested in building new drums. They left us with all the vintage stuff. We believe in the heart of the old drums, so that's why we're happy to keep them. We've run a couple of classified ads in *Modern Drummer* offering old shells and vintage parts. The vintage market has pretty much cleared us out of old Radio King shells, but there are a few left."

When Fred bought Slingerland, he acquired the Leedy name as well. When he sold Slingerland to Gibson, he kept Leedy. "We're currently offering Leedy snare drums," he says, "although they're not made in Ridgeland. But something could happen in the future." •

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for quick finishing, we've gone from a delivery time of up to a year, to a point where we can deliver drums in maple, walnut, rosewood, and burnt orange finishes within eight weeks. We can deliver Nitron covered drums—in thirty-plus finishes and in all sizes—in six to eight weeks. Of course, totally custom drumkit orders still take longer. But even that time has been shortened by the ready availability of parts."

Fred Gretsch displays a drum in the retro-style Duco finish. Gretsch's famous silver sealer is visible inside the shell, and in the center of the outside.

The Expanded Line

The new complete Gretsch line combines the high-end drums made in the Ridgeland plant with several new series made overseas. Detailed descriptions of the various series are included in the "Gretsch Gear" sidebar of this story. But Tim O'Neal offers some additional comments of particular interest to drummers.

"Our entry-level Blackhawk series is a starter kit," says Tim. "But it isn't generic. We took the familiar Gretsch lug and made it just a little smaller and rounder. We also put a Gretsch 30° bearing edge on a mahogany shell, which no one has ever done. And we use covered finishes that give the kits a young, fresh look.

"Our Catalina Club kit is a response to the popularity of small jazz-style setups," says Tim. "We use lightweight mahogany shells, a vintage design with single centered lugs, and white pearl and silver sparkle covered finishes. With their 16" bass drums, they make great compact gigging kits, second kits, hip-hop kits, or fusion kits. And they're great for smaller drummers who don't fit on a kit with a 22" bass drum.

"Our Catalina Birch kit features a UV gloss finish on 100% birch shells," Tim continues, "which is a first for Gretsch. The drums offer great projection, and they come with top-of-the-line Evans heads right out of the box. You don't have to buy the drumset and then spend an extra $100 on heads before you're ready to play.

"Renown Maple is our top overseas-made line," Tim concludes. "It features all-maple shells, 30° bearing edges, the legendary silver sealer, and USA Custom-style lugs, die-cast hoops, and suspension mounts. We offer it in a 10"/12"/14"/22" configuration, in several lacquer finishes. We gave it as much Gretsch flavor and flare as we possibly could in order to offer drummers their first taste of a professional Gretsch kit. The overall comment we get is that they sound like 'classic' Gretsch drums with the volume turned up a little."

Boosting The American-Made Drums

In addition to expanding the total range with offshore-made models, Kaman's association with Gretsch has helped to generate additional demand for the high-end American-made drums—whose reputation has already been long established.

"The Gretsch USA Custom formula, which Fred Gretsch refers to as the 'performance and recording quality' product, is still what's demanded in the studios," says Tim O'Neal. "There are thousands of artists out there who are closet Gretsch drummers, even if they're officially associated with other manufacturers. If you ask the top ten cartage agencies in the world what their most in-demand kits are, they'll say Gretsch.

"A company can do a whole lot of marketing and make drums that are really pretty," Tim offers. "But drummers who are putting their sound on a recording expect Gretsch quality, and the only way they can get that is by playing on Gretsch drums. It's all about the sound, and that sound is the most important thing to us."

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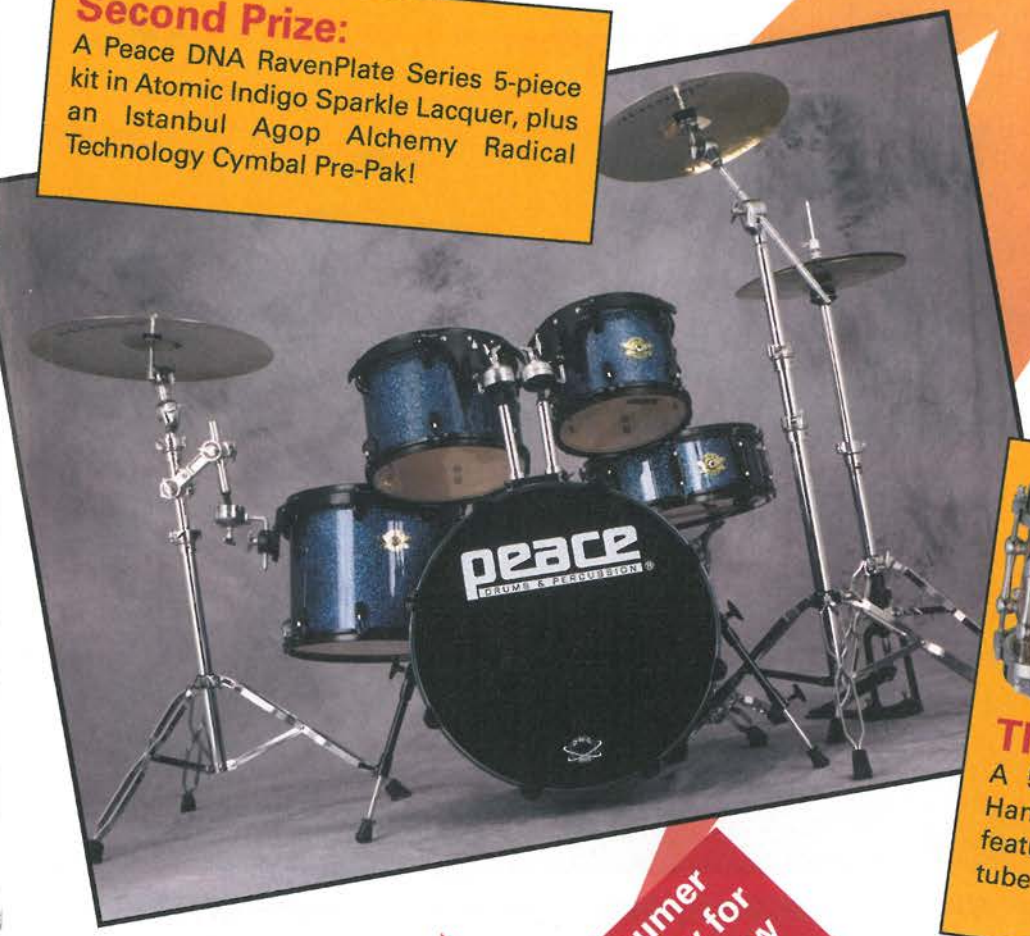

Third Prize:
A $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 Peace Batterie Series Hand-Hammered Copper Snare, featuring die-cast hoops and Deus tube lugs!

See the consumer disclosure below for instructions on how to enter and win!

Consumer Disclosure

1. To enter: Send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, telephone number, and email address (if applicable) to: Modern Drummer/Peace/Istanbul Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish, but each hand-written entry must be mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 10/1/04 AND ENDS 12/31/04. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 12/31/04 AND RECEIVED BY 1/6/05. 5. The winner will be selected by random drawing on or before January 14, 2005 and notified by phone on or about January 17, 2005. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Peace, Istanbul Agop, and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to the residents of US and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec), 12 years of age or older. Void where prohibited by law. 9. One prize awarded per household per contest. 10. Grand Prize: One (1) winner will receive a Peace DNA Standard 7-piece drumkit with 9-micro-ply maple shells in Strawberry Fields lacquer finish. The set includes: 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 12x14, and 14x16 tom-toms, an 18x22 bass drum, a $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 snare drum, and a 5x8 Steel Sopprano snare with hardware. Istanbul Agop Traditional cymbals included: a 12" splash, 16", 17", and 18" crash cymbals (1 each), a 17" Chinese, a 20" ride, and a pair of Regular 14" Hi-Hats. Suggested retail value: $5,113. Second prize: A Peace DNA RavenPlate Series 5-piece kit in Atomic Indigo Sparkle Lacquer. This kit features all Maple shells, Cresent suspension mounts, and Arena 800 Series Hardware. The set includes: 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 toms 1 each), an 18x20 bass drum, and a $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 snare with hardware. One (1) Istanbul Agop Alchemy Radical Technology Pre-Pak includes: a pair of 14" Hi-Hats, a 16" crash, a 20" ride, and a cymbal bag. Suggested retail value: $2,474. Third Prize: One (1) Peace $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 Batterie Series Hand-Hammered Copper snare drum with die-cast hoops and Deus tube lugs. Suggested retail price: $640. 11. Approximate retail value of contest: $8,225. 12. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 13. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, write to Modern Drummer Publications/Peace/Istanbul/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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Hossam Ramzy

The Ambassador Of Egyptian Rhythm

by David Licht

Marcelo Duque Cesar

Egyptian percussionist Hossam Ramzy is a world musician of the highest order. Besides lending his considerable talents to dozens of ethnic recordings and tours, Ramzy continually crosses over into other music worlds, easily mixing his traditional expertise with modern Western sounds.

Pop fans are largely aware of Hossam through his work on Peter Gabriel's *Passion* album and on Jimmy Page & Robert Plant's *No Quarter* reunion project. Further exploration reveals names like Joan Armatrading, Larry Coryell, Killing Joke, The Electric Light Orchestra, Loreena McKennitt, Big Country, Jay-Z, Boy George—even Luciano Pavarotti.

Gigs

Peter Gabriel

Jimmy Page & Robert Plant

Big Country

Jay-Z

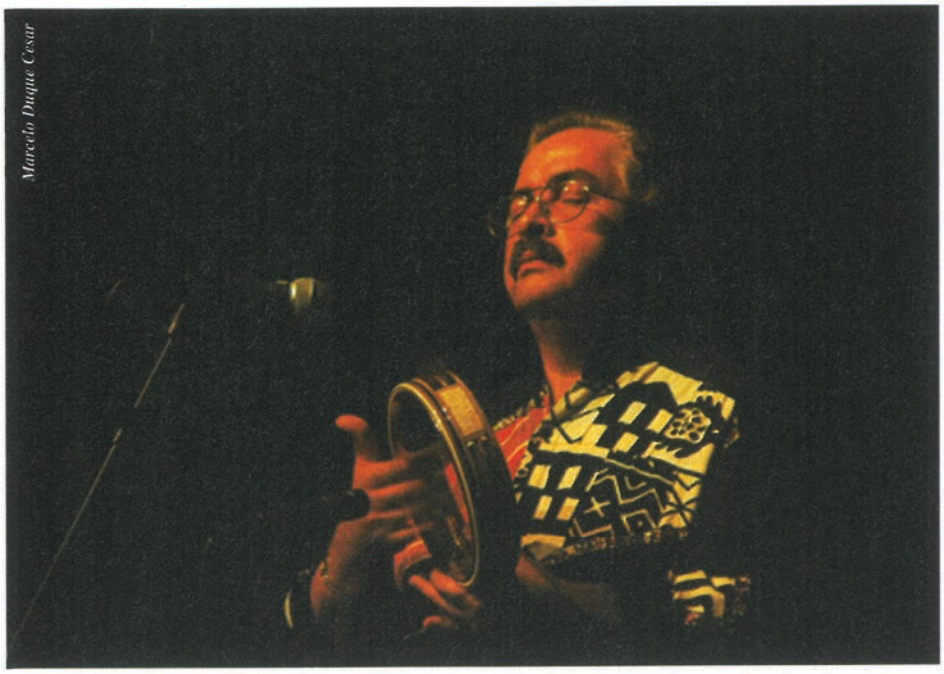
Larry Coryell

Loreena McKennitt

Luciano Pavarotti

Ramzy has also released eighteen albums under his own name—deep, swirling collections of rhythmic magic, impeccably played and authentically rendered. In addition, he's built his own state-of-the art recording facility, where he plies rhythms seemingly as old as Moses, yet captured with equipment as cutting-edge as it comes. And being a jazz drummer in addition to a percussion maestro, Hossam has a unique angle on the kit player's art.

David Licht, drummer of The Klezmatics, is a leader on the contemporary Jewish music scene. David shares Ramzy's obsession with Middle Eastern musics, so he jumped at a recent opportunity to chat with the modern percussion virtuoso. *MD* just as quickly jumped to bring you the results of that conversation.


Marcelo Duque Cesar

"My intention is to show people the beauty of melodic rhythm, and the conversational ability of rhythm."

David: I went to your Web site recently [www.hossamramzy.com] to do some research on your amazing life and career. As a fellow percussionist, I'm totally fascinated. You're in another world, and you seem to be at the top of your game now.

Hossam: Thanks, David, this acknowledgement really means a lot to me.

David: I was curious about your beginnings. You were given the Egyptian tabla at age three?

Hossam: Yes, this was the time when I became aware of it. My son is two years old, and I have photos of him holding the drum properly since he was around nine months old. We have quite a few videos of him and me jamming when he was just one and a half.

David: I'm sure you're learning as much from him as you are from other sources.

Hossam: Oh, definitely!

David: Since dance figures so heavily in much of the music you play, I was wondering if you immediately connected your drumming with dancing, even before you began playing the drumset.

Hossam: Yes, drumming and dancing always go hand-in-hand. I have always been fascinated by dancing in Egypt. It's such a fantastic art form, and I was really taken by it. Dancing is in *every* house in the Middle East, especially in Egypt. My sisters, cousins—all of my family danced at birthdays, weddings, and every other kind of celebration.

I've always been fascinated by how drummers make the intricacies of their playing suit dance movements, and vice versa. That caught my eye and ear at a very early age. How can I put it...in the Western world there are dance-style drummers and there are dance-style composers, mixers, and re-mixers. I'm just one of those guys, but in Egypt.

David: There's *so* much momentum and flow from tune to tune on your new CD, *Sabla Tolo II*. It's very melodic, and it's quite a different approach to drumming for someone like me, who is from the Western world. In the liner notes, you've detailed your compositions, describing the sources as well as what rhythms are used from bar to bar.

Hossam: The compositions are played and performed this way because of a certain rea-

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son, and that is because I don't believe in making drum solos just for the sake of making drum solos—you know, things that show how clever I am or how technical I can be. I also don't like overly complex rhythms, or rhythms that are odd for the sake of being odd. My intention is to show people the beauty of melodic rhythm, and the conversational ability of rhythm. After all, rhythm was originally a communication source.

David: There are sections where you indicate Q & A. Relating that to West African music, there are conversations going on and different tempos and sounds for each culture.

Hossam: Yes, it's all question & answer, you know. It's like the tabla says, Bla-bla-bla-bla-bla, and the other guys are saying, Yeah, hear, hey, hey, hear! You know, like the Houses of Parliament.

David: Listening to *Sabla Tolo II*, there is a flow to it, it's not jerky. And you have a very definite sense of high pitch and low pitch. The riq [tambourine] is used as a spice, and then the drums push forward with their variety of timbres; it's sonic pleasure.

Hossam: I'm impressed with your analysis,

Hossam Ramzy's latest album, Sabla Tolo II, features comprehensive notes detailing the different rhythms used in the music.

because this is precisely what it is. I hate those rhythms that are like tongue-twisters: she sells sea shells.... I like to make rhythms like my nine, tesaawy, which goes: [sings] ta(ka) ti(ka) *doom*, ti(ka) *ta*(ki) ta(*ta*) ka *doom* (x2). You can funk to that, you can swing to that. You can write melody to it. And you can really sweeten it. Or the sevens: [sings] *doom* ti(ka) *doom* ti(ka) ta *doom doom* ti(ka) *ta* (x2), and the twelves: [sings] *ta* ka(ti) ka *doom* ti(ka) *ta* ka(ti) ka *doom doom doom*. Somebody, even a rhythmic ignoramus, will listen to this and say, Wow! This is sweet, I can grab the beginning and end of that. It's not like this hero-worship junk, going to hear a name drummer, and coming out and saying, I couldn't begin to find where I was. Well, that's so easy to bloody do! What I crave for is the 4/4 or the 2/4 within any rhythm. This is called "rhythmic illusions." My dearest friend and most respected mentor, Mr. Chick Corea, taught me this at a very early stage of my life.

David: He's a great drummer too, right?

Hossam: He is out of this world! He's such

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Brady Blade

a good drummer you want to take a contract out on his life! [laughs] He's rubbed shoulders with Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, and Roy Haynes. The greatest drummers in the world have worked with Chick. And he told me about rhythmic illusions: where you think 2 and 4 are, and where 2 and 4 *really* are. Take this nine rhythm that I sang to you just a minute ago: [sings] *ta* ka(ti) ka *doom* ti(ka) ta(ka) ti *ta* ka *doom* 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4-5. It starts with a *tak*. If you take the next bar and make that *tak* number two over 4/4, which is *doom* ti(ka) *tak* ti(ka) ti ka ti(ka) ti(ka) *tak* ti(ka) *doom* [Hossam then sings them together]. So you are moving between the four and the nine. It's really very sexy and very flowing.

David: And it's not all about mathematics.

Hossam: No, it's not all about mathematics, but it's so mathematical! There's a big difference between using a computer to generate music [sings a blurry fast pattern], and using a computer to edit, finalize, and completely re-shape your sound, and make your sound flow better. If you have a bar that's a little bit out, you can smooth it. This is the use of the mathematical technology that I like.

David: On *Sabla Tolo II*, did you use loops, or is it all live playing?

Hossam: It's all live playing, man. And the same with *Sabla Tolo I*. I don't want to sound like I'm name-dropping, but Peter Gabriel also taught me one thing, and that is "state of the art with a human face." Use this amazing technology that we have today so that you can bring your humanity through.

I have a philosophy: The true art of Oriental dancing is to visually hear the music. I'm currently working on an album with Phil Thornton. We've already done two albums together, *Eternal Egypt* and *Immortal Egypt*. On this new one there's an amazing concept that we're doing: We're taking an old song that I have composed and arranged and making it the base for a new song. We're putting a completely different groove underneath it, and then getting musicians afresh, and telling them, "Here's your answer, now you ask the question!" Now *here's* a way of modernizing. I'm not saying it's *the* way of modernizing, but it is *a* way of modernizing—taking part of the old and creating something new.

David: Tell us about your inspiration and teachers while growing up. You mention the Hammonda brothers on your new CD. Did you study with them?

Hossam: I studied with Mahmoud on a regular basis, but Ahmed was also a great inspiration because I always went to see him and observed him a lot. They are both big names in their field. Ahmed was into more of a dance style than Mahmoud, but I studied with Mahmoud because Ahmed told me to.

Ahmed said to me, "You play with a lot of technique, but you need grounding." When I was little—until last year, ha!—I was under the impression that the faster you are, the better you are, and the more complex you are, the better you are, which was due to my jazz drumming and applying that to my Egyptian tabla. Ahmed said to me that I really needed to get the depth and the essence of the Egyptian feel, from playing the old-style singers' type of drumming, which is so restrained, so emotional in its context. So I did that.

Mahmoud never taught me any technique, but he used to talk about the placement of the *dooms* and the *tak*, and why this feel is here, and why this roll is there, and

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when to delay it and when to push it a little bit—and all this without changing the accuracy of your tempo. Ah, the flow of the stuff, it's quite a complex study. But I really appreciated it, because it made me think deeper about rhythm itself. Mahmoud said to me that no rhythm has a roll in it. So like any rhythm, Egyptian for example, will be *doom tak* ti ka tak *doom* ti ka *tak* ta ka *doom tak* tik tak *doom tak*. You know, it's never written: *brrroom* tak brrr*ak ddom brrrak* rrraka tak *doom tak*. You can play it like that, but it's not the rhythm. The rhythm is clean: doom and tak.

David: High pitch and low pitch.

Hossam: Yeah, it's the notation, you know. What you put in it will definitely change its character. The rolls that you put in there will change its personality. But the question is, *when* do you change that character of the rhythm? And that is only *if* the music needs it. And Mahmoud used to say to me, What in the music made you *feel* that you wanted to do that? What in the music *asked* you to do brrr*oom doom* ta ka *doom doom*? The rule of the drummer is to keep the rhythm.

David: You mentioned to me that you're currently learning about video editing.

Ask Hossam!

Drummers and percussionists, if you have questions you'd like Hossam Ramzy to answer, email them to him at **drumzy@btconnect.com.** (Be sure to put "Ask Hossam" in the subject line.) We'll print Hossam's personal answers in a future issue.

Hossam: I'm taking serious classes in that because I'm in the middle of doing a dance choreography with my wife, Serena. I've produced a book/DVD about playing Egyptian percussion, where you will be able to read it, hear it, and see it. It makes a lot of difference when you see these things done. Also right now I'm doing a new version of the series *The Stars Of Egypt* [which contains vintage footage of famous Egyptian singers and dancers]. A much more detailed version of that is going to be out on DVD, where you'll be able to read about a particular clip: What's the name of the film, who are the stars, who was the director, what is the story of the film, *why* is she dancing this particular dance in the film, what's the cause for her to get up and dance...? And then there is the Hossam Ramzy edition of the music, which is like a breakdown of the song, like I do on *Sabla Tolo*. Of course, you can appreciate how long *that* is going to take. [laughs]

The reason I've chosen music and dance as my career is because my aim is the promotion of my culture—not just the religion, not the language, but the whole thing: the music, the dance, the art, the colors, the architecture, the designs.... This is the reason I'm here. I don't think one lifetime is enough for that! There is so much to do and so much that I need to get on with.

David: You're known as The Ambassador of Egyptian Rhythm.

Hossam: It's just the job definition! It gives me a lot of enthusiasm and momentum to carry on. Every morning, come rain or come shine, I'm so excited about getting up and doing some more, because I know what great consequences will come from this kind of endeavor—and I hope that I'm delivering. I'm very grateful to life for being here.

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Free Online Drum Lessons

Worth Your Time, Or Feeding You A Line?

by Douglas Wurst

Free things are good, right? But with many "free" things come catches. In the case of free online lessons, catches include pop-up ads, as well as invitations to buy more lessons and traditional hard-copy method books. If you can get past these annoyances, however, the free lessons can be worthwhile.

Of course, these sites can never replace the interactive nature of a real, live private teacher. Still, they can be interesting and informative. Below are some of the best "e-lessons" sites for your perusal.

tigerbill.com

Scroll down to find "Tiger Bill's Free Drum Lesson List." (Don't stop at "Free Drum & Percussion Forums.") The button you want is almost at the bottom of the page. The lessons are in the form of articles and are on a variety of subjects: Building Monster Chops, Build Your Double Bass Chops, Developing Dynamite Dynamics, Four-Way Jazz Chops, Getting Your Feet Up To Speed, Rudiments Around The Drums, Secret To Four-Way Coordination, Workin' The Weak Hand, and several more.

TigerBill's
DrumBeat
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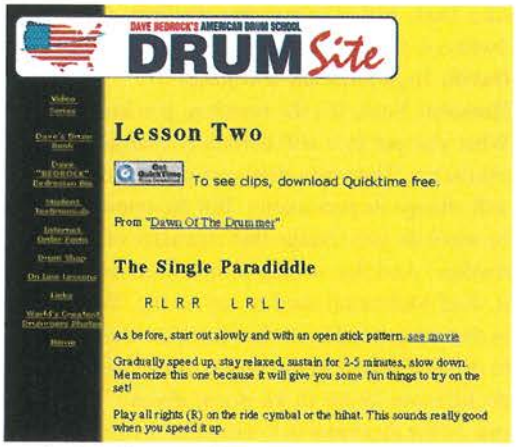
Expert Advice, Products, Resources, & Talk About Drums, Drumming, & Percussion
Building Monster Chops: Part 1
Have you ever witnessed a true artist drummer in action? Someone like Buddy Rich, Louis Bellson, or Joe Morello? Have you ever wondered how they achieve such tremendous speed, even sound, and perfect dynamics in their playing?
When great drummers play, their accents seem to fly in from out of nowhere. The faster they play, the more relaxed they become. There's no strain, no stress, no muscle tension at all.
Have you ever tried to play at top speed for as long as you can? What happened? Did you stay loose and relaxed? Or did you find your muscles eventually tightened up and slowed you down?
Whether you're interested in going for the World's Fastest Drummer record (see sidebar) or just wish you could have some cool monster chops, I've got good news for you. You can! Anybody can. Great drummers are not born naturally fast. They have a secret.
Actually, true artist drummers have a few secrets (see Eight Essentials of the Artist Drummer in the sidebar). Over the next few weeks, I'm going to
Site Search
Home

americandrumschool.com

Find the button "Click Here To See Over 40 Instructional Drum Video Clips," located underneath the picture of Dave "Bedrock" Bedrosian. The lessons are divided into the following categories: Lesson One (How To Hold The Sticks, The Mighty Two, and Preparation For Rock And Roll Backbeat), Lesson Two (The Single Paradiddle and The Five-Stroke Roll), 7 Essential Rudiments, 34 Additional Rudiments, Upbeats And Downbeats, Combinations, Wrists Of Fury, Deep Fried Drums, Drum Tuning Tips, Setting Up Your Drums, and Making Practice Count. Some of the lessons have picture and video support.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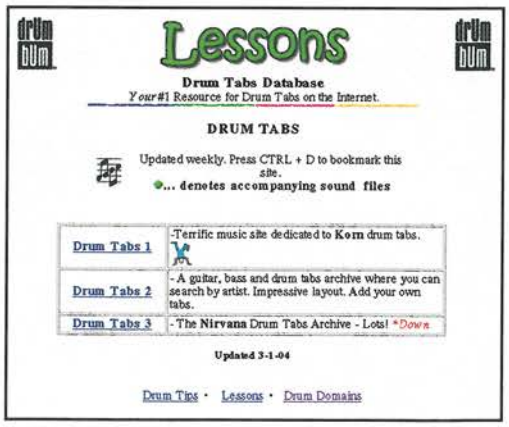
Lesson Two
To see clips, download Quicktime free.
From "Dawn Of The Drummer"
The Single Paradiddle
R L R R L R L L
As before, start out slowly and with an open stick pattern. see movie
Gradually speed up, stay relaxed, sustain for 2-5 minutes, slow down. Memorize this one because it will give you some fun things to try on the set!
Play all rights (R) on the ride cymbal or the hihat. This sounds really good when you speed it up.

drumbum.com

This site boasts that there are "Over 400 Free Lessons." The reality is that the site contains links to other sites where the free lessons are really located. Though you'll be taken to many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Lessons
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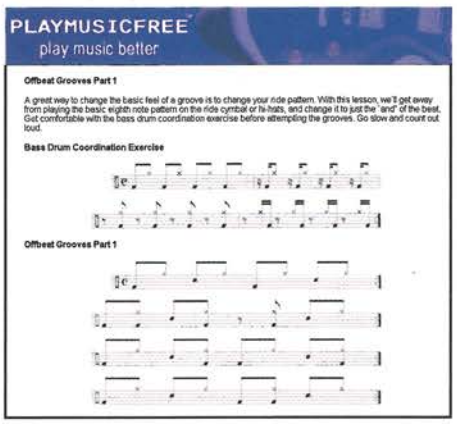
Drum Tabs Database
Your #1 Resource for Drum Tabs on the Internet.
DRUM TABS
Updated weekly. Press CTRL + D to bookmark this site.
... denotes accompanying sound files
Drum Tabs 1
-Terrific music site dedicated to Korn drum tabs.
Drum Tabs 2
- A guitar, bass and drum tabs archive where you can search by artist. Impressive layout. Add your own tabs.
Drum Tabs 3
- The Nirvana Drum Tabs Archive - Lots! *Down
Updated 3-1-04
Drum Tips · Lessons · Drum Domains

high-quality sites, several will be inactive. I found this frustrating, but I still recommend that you give the site a try. Click on the "Drum Lessons Database" button. Scroll down and you'll find a chart containing the lessons, presented in alphabetical order. If you continue to scroll down, you'll find the lessons in a list, with each lesson's content described.

playmusicfree.com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Offbeat Grooves Part 1
A great way to change the basic feel of a groove is to change your ride pattern. With this lesson, we'll get away from playing the basic eighth note pattern on the ride cymbal or hi-hats, and change it to just the "and" of the beat. Get comfortable with the bass drum coordination exercise before attempting the grooves. Go slow and count out loud.
Bass Drum Coordination Exercise
Offbeat Grooves Part 1

Under the heading "Guitar, Bass, Drums, And Music Theory," find the button "Drum Lessons." You'll be taken to the following lessons: Basic Grooves, Eighth-Note Grooves, Offbeat Grooves, and Grooves With Hi-Hat. Note that these lessons are primarily for less experienced drummers.

drumrhythms.com

This site sells lessons for drumset and hand percussion. There are, however, three free lessons with accompanying video demonstrations that I found interesting: Basic Rockbeat, Rolls/Double Strokes, and Rudiments. You'll find the "Free Lessons" button on the left side of the home page.

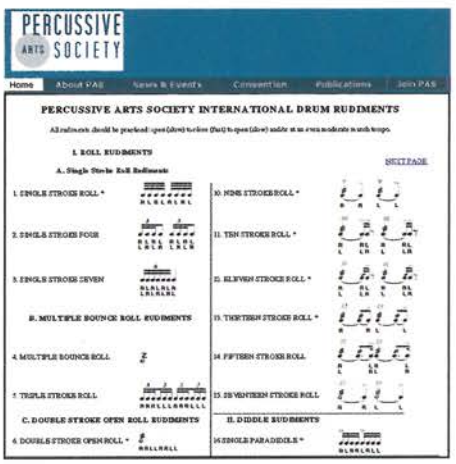
moderndrummer.com

Once you arrive at *MD*'s site, look for the word "Playing." Click on the button "Selected Technique Articles From The Pages Of *MD*." You'll find articles about fills, grooves, and specialty rudiments, which are downloadable as PDF files. Many of the articles have audio support, as indicated by the instruction "Click the icon next to any exercise to hear the sound!"

MODERN DRUMMER
Playing
Check out selected technique articles from the pages of Modern Drummer—now with a growing number of demonstration sound files! All audio clips are currently available as MP3 files only.
FILLS
The Art Of The Flowing Fill
The "Third Hand" Concept, Part 3
The "Third Hand" Concept, Part 2
The "Third Hand" Concept, Part 1
Playing Simple Fills
GROOVES
Linear Paradiddle Grooves
The Bolero: Brazilian Solo Fun
Jazz Hi-Hat And Ride Cymbal Variations For Standard Rock Beats
In The Studio Online
The Art Of The Flowing Fill

Under the word "Playing" you'll also find the button "Virtual Drum School Lessons." You'll find sixty-three lessons divided into five categories: Right Hand-Left Hand; Bass, Hi-Hat, Snare; One Accent To Move; Two Accents To Move; and Language Applications For Drumkit Playing. The lessons are supported with audio and video demonstrations. If you play along with the demonstrations, you can compare your performance with that of the experts. You'll thoroughly enjoy these lessons.

pas.org



The Percussive Arts Society site has free download lessons. Scroll down to find them at the bottom of the page. The lessons are in the following categories: International Drum Rudiments, FUNdamentals (Basic Beats), and HOTLicks (Latin Paradiddles, Jazz Drumset Warm-Ups, Flammed Mill Explorations, Jazz Triplet Study, and more.) The HOTlicks category in particular contains "Exercises that can be used as technique builders and warm-ups, contributed by prominent players and teachers to PAS Publications." Each of the exercises can be heard using a MIDI file. This is another outstanding site.

Going Off-Line

Though there are other "Free Lesson" Web sites, many have only a few lessons. Others have only one free sample lesson as a come-on to buy more lessons. I'm not saying that purchasing online lessons is necessarily bad. I just don't like the idea of a "Buy Lessons" solicitation showing up on a "Free Lessons" Web site search.

Happy surfing!

Tuning Snare Drums

Why Not Take The Low Road?

by Billy Ward

The snare drum is my favorite drum on the drumset. While the bass drum is important, my feet simply don't have the same nuance that my hands do. And for most players, the snare drum is probably the most personal of drumming items.

My philosophy and approach to tuning snare drums is based on, first of all, my concept that most snare drums are tuned *too high*—especially the bottom head! Of course, this is affected very much by the quality and design of not only the bearing edge of the drum but also the snare bed.

Almost any snare drum will sound okay with the heads cranked up. However, in my opinion, tuning a drum lower—and hearing how well it sings in its middle register—is largely what separates the high-quality drums from the average ones.

"My approach is no doubt not *endorsed by any drum company."*

By the way, my approach is no doubt *not* endorsed by any drum company. It's simply the way I personally hear things. With that disclaimer out of the way, let's proceed. The first thing I do when tuning a snare drum is start with…

The Bottom Head

The importance the bottom head plays in a snare drum's sound can never be underestimated. For starters, take a Sharpie and write the date that the new bottom head was placed on the drum. This way, when a year is up, you'll know that it's time to get a new bottom head. Change that sucker! This makes all the difference in the world. Fresh heads = happy drums.

I normally tune the bottom head of my snare drum loose enough so that I can exert a bit of pressure with my thumb—say one inch from the edge of the rim—and the head will give perhaps an eighth of an inch. With the gentle slope of some drum companies' snare beds, I frequently will set the head tension a teeny bit looser away from the snare bed than the tension right at the snare bed.

At this point, you'll no doubt tap the drum to see what's going on. This brings us to the next section of BW tuning…

Snare Tension

This is where (again, in my opinion) most drummers really mess up. Most snares that I hear are *way* too tight. That tight, snappy, snare-tensioned drum might sound great to the drummer sitting right above it, but to the audience (or microphone) it sounds like a small chirping dog—yip, yip, YIP, YIP! I believe that a loose (yes, even buzzing) snare drum will, at a distance and to a microphone, sound great.

And now that your bottom head is tuned looser than ever before, your snares are probably even tighter against the head. In fact, they're downright choking the drum. So loosen those suckers up. Give 'em some air! But first, just out of curiosity, turn off the snares and tap the top head with a stick, brush, or your hand. What's the sound? Does it sound like "dee," or does it sound like "doo"? (Maybe it will help if I mention that "doo" is a similar sound to that of an open conga hit.)

I prefer "doo"—that is, if the drum's dimensions, shell quality, bearing edge, snare bed, hoops, etc. are up to the task. The choice of heads greatly affects tone as well. It seems that a double-ply head will have more midrange than single-ply heads, for instance. In fact, you might say that there are a differing series of harmonic overtones from one type or brand of head to another. I hope you experiment to discover these differences and begin to discover a sound that can eventually become part of your signature tone.

Tuning The Top Head

Just like you, perhaps, I can never resist the urge to play the top head of a drum after adjusting the bottom head and snares. But I'll quickly stop playing, grab the drumkey, and start *detuning* the top head. I do this with the snares turned off. As I detune, I tap the drum with my hand and listen for that "doo" sound again. When I have it, I stop detuning and then I turn on the snares. Again, they're too tight! I want my snares to sound like "phlffthssthssss." Give me sustain!

The Evilness Of Buzz

Of course, if you've followed my method so far, by now your snare is really setting off and buzzin' away, especially in relation to the toms. With a lower-pitched snare drum, you might be experiencing more sympathetic buzz from your snare drum

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Billy Ward

than you can live with. I believe that the best way to deal with this and still get the most from each drum is to reserve a space, or pitch-zone, for the snare drum that doesn't conflict with where the toms are pitched.

When I play a two-tom kit, I tune the snare drum to be highest in pitch, with the two toms pitched below. With three or four toms, I pitch my first (and smallest) tom *higher* than the snare drum, possibly as high as a fourth above the snare. Then my second tom is tuned lower than the snare drum, and each consecutive tom is much lower still. This agrees with my preference of tom-tom tuning and it places their pitches far away from that of the snare drum. I like tom-toms to be very high *and* very low. Only using two toms? For me, they might be an octave apart. But with four toms, I want a very broad pitch spectrum.

If you have a spare hour or two, take your favorite snare drum and try the tuning method I've described. See if your ears agree with mine. Everybody is different, of course, and that's what makes life interesting. You might have trouble adjusting to hearing more buzz out of your snare drum. But again, mic's don't hear it and any engineer that says it's a problem isn't...well, I'm not going to go into that! But allow yourself an adjustment period if you can. Also, it's obviously a bit more difficult to play complicated, fast things on a looser-tensioned snare drum. But there's always room for better and faster technique, right?

For more on Billy Ward, go to www.billyward.com.

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Anniversary Present

Drum Workshop Neil Peart Edge Snare Drum

To commemorate Rush's thirtieth Anniversary and DW's association with rock drumming icon Neil Peart, DW is offering a special Collector's Series Edge snare drum. The drum features a Black Mirra Flake Lacquer Specialty finish with Rush's familiar "Starman" logo, 24-karat gold-plated hardware, and DW's new Delta ball-bearing throw-off.

Edge snare drums utilize DW's patented solid brass ring with wood center construction for drummers looking for the brightness and high-end crack of a metal shell and the warmth of maple. The Neil Peart model has a list price of $1,535.

(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

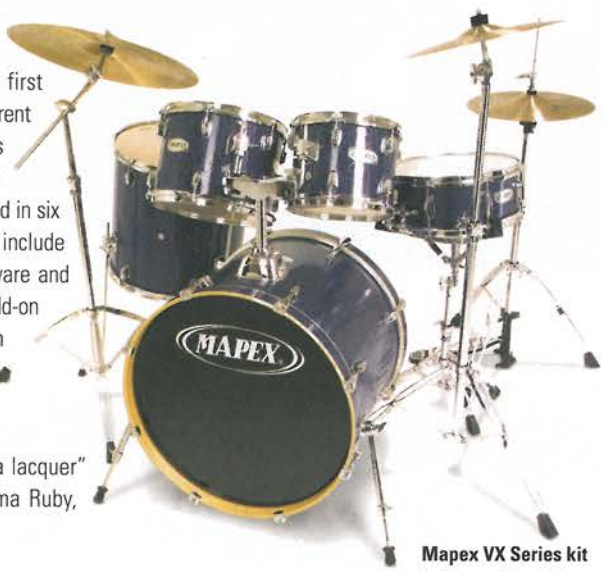
Starting With Something Different

Mapex VX Series Drumkits

Mapex's new VX series drumsets are designed to appeal to budding musicians who are ready to purchase their first "real" drumset and want something different from what everyone else is playing. Kits include 9-ply, 8-mm basswood shells and a matching basswood snare drum. Offered in six different configurations, VX series kits include Mapex 320-series double-braced hardware and are also available with 8x8 and 8x10 add-on toms. The drumsets are offered with Chindal cast cymbals, including 14" hi-hats and 16" and 18" crashes, along with an embroidered padded cymbal bag.

Kits will be available in "3-D Plasma lacquer" finishes including Plasma Black, Plasma Ruby, Plasma Sapphire, and Plasma Slate, with matching lacquered bass drum hoops. The finishes are said to be "a radical departure from wraps" and "an unusually durable lacquer for a category of instrument that generally takes a beating." Five-piece Mapex VX series drumsets, including cymbals, double-braced hardware, and a throne, carry a list price of $1,039. Drummers purchasing a VX series kit between now and December 31, 2004 will receive a coupon for a free Mapex Pro-Series 5x10 steel snare drum valued at $160 (available directly from Mapex with the coupon and proof of purchase).

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.



Mapex VX Series kit in Plasma Sapphire

Test Your Latin Metal...Er, Mettle

Meinl Professional And Headliner Timbales

Meinl has added two new sets of timbales to their range of percussion instruments. The new Professional Series timbales are made from German B8 cymbal bronze, and come in 14" and 15" sizes. They feature two worked-in flanges, a "Cuban style" flared-out bottom edge, brackets cast from a special brass alloy, a height-adjustable stand, a cowbell holder, an L-shaped tuning key, and Tune Up Oil. The drums are said to produce a warm sound with cutting rimshots and enhanced cascara potential. List price is $790.

Meinl's Headliner timbales are designed to be "the perfect introduction to the joy and passion of timbale playing," at an affordable price. The 13" and 14" drums are made from chrome-plated steel. They come with a heavy-duty height-adjustable stand, a tuning key, a wrench, and a cowbell holder, at a list price of $299.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlpercussion.com.

So Where's Mason?

Dixon 700 Hardware Line

The Dixon 700 line of affordable hardware now includes the new 711DB double bass pedal. It features a dual-surface beater with single-chain CAM drive system, easy-access bass-drum hoop clamp adjustment, and stabilizer platforms with built-in spurs.

Dixon's 707 lightweight double-braced hi-hat stand features a direct-pull system with a double chain, hinged height adjustment, and a cast tripod collar with a captive threaded bolt insert. Finally, the lightweight 709 double-braced boom stand features a hideaway boom arm, an 8-mm extended geared tilter, and hinged height adjustments.

(860) 509-8888, www.dixondrumhardware.com.

The Whole World Can Be Your Practice Pad

New Practice Sticks From Pro-Mark

Pro-Mark has introduced two models of practice sticks designed in association with educator Matt Savage. Dubbed X-Beats, the sticks feature permanently attached, molded rubber tips on premium-quality American hickory shafts. They're designed for use on any solid surface, thus eliminating the need for traditional practice pads.

The TXXB1 is 16½" (419 mm) long and .630" (16 mm) in diameter. It's the size of a traditional drumset or concert stick. The TXXB2 is 17" (432 mm) long and .710" (18 mm) in diameter, similar in size to a marching stick. Suggested retail price for both models is $26.95 per pair.

(877) PRO-MARK, www.promark.com.

Heavy Or Light... Take Your Pick

Yamaha Mike Bordin and Jimmy Chamberlin Signature Snares

With its heavy composition and massive sound, Yamaha's new SD-6455MB snare drum characterizes the innovative style of metal drummer Mike Bordin, who has pounded the skins for Faith No More, Ozzy Osbourne, and Korn. The 6½x14 drum features a 2 mm–thick copper shell with a hand-hammered lower half, an unhammered upper half, and a black finish. It's said to deliver extreme bottom end and a clean cut.

The SD-2455JC snare is designed to project the energy and dynamics of Jimmy Chamberlin, best known for his work with The Smashing Pumpkins. It features a 5½x14 matte chrome steel shell said to bring a wood-like warmth to the steel's characteristically sharp tone and powerful volume. The drum is fitted with 3-mm aluminum die-cast rims said to draw a bright, open sound while eliminating high-frequency overtones and producing cutting, crisp rimshots. Small, square lugs attached with a single-bolt design minimize contact between the shell and the lug, allowing the drum to resonate freely.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Mike Bordin (top) and Jimmy Chamberlin snare drums

Intruder Alert

Gibraltar Intruder Strap Drive Pedals And Bent-Pipe V-Racks

Intruder Strap Drive single and double pedals from Gibraltar are designed to be fast and responsive. They feature a Kevlar strap that will not stretch with use, along with pedal board height adjustment independent of spring tension or beater angle, a fast rocker with a die-cast bearing, and a quick-release Rock Stabilizer plate.

In other Gibraltar news, the company's new Bent-Pipe V-Racks are said to create better positioning and allow tom-toms, hanging floor toms, cymbals, and accessories to mount more efficiently, while giving players a distinctive look on stage.

(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com.

Get 'Em While They're Young

Nino Child-Size Fiberglass Congas

Nino Percussion offers fiberglass congas designed to be played by children. The shells are said to create a powerful sound while being lighter than wood congas for easier handling. The 8"- and 9"-diameter drums are 22" high, making them appropriate for seated or stand-up playing by children. Rounded rims increase playing comfort, and hand-selected buffalo heads ensure a strong, rich sound. Included are a basket stand and a tuning key. Drums are available in red and Harlekin finishes, at a list price of $336.

Nino Percussion instruments meet the requirements of early childhood education, and are suitable for use in schools, music therapy, and home musical activities.

(615) 227-5090, www.ninopercussion.com.

Birthday Quartet

New Kits From Sunlite

Sunlite is celebrating their twentieth anniversary by introducing modified, upgraded, or totally revamped versions of four drumsets. Lacquer-finished Top Gun kits now feature 9-ply combination shells of maple and basswood, similar to Sunlite's top-of-the-line Studio kits. The Top Gun kit also receives the same pro-level rim-mount suspension package. The standard hardware package is the medium-duty 84 series, including a straight cymbal stand, a hi-hat stand, a snare stand, and a BS-84 bass pedal. Two new hand-applied satin lacquer finishes have been added to the color chart.

The mid-level Pro Challenge has also been upgraded with a new rim-mounted suspension system. It too receives the 84 series hardware package. The eight-lug matching wood snare now comes with the pro-level S-05 throw-off, and a new Midnight Blue Metallic wrap finish has been added to the available colors.

The jazz-sized "Velocity" kit moves out of the entry level with teardrop-style lugs, a new eight-lug snare, and an 84 series hardware package upgrade. The SP-509DP-Select entry-level kit—now dubbed NS-509—also gets the teardrop lugs, an eight-lug snare drum, and the Midnight Blue Metallic wrap. The kit remains a complete package that includes cymbals and throne. A slightly less expensive NS-300 version comes with a six-lug snare, an SS-70DN snare stand, and different alloy cymbals.

(626) 448-8018, www.sunlitedrum.com.

Sunlite Top Gun

Sunlite NS-509

Sometimes It's Good To Think Small

MRP 13" Stainless-Steel Snare Drums And Single Tom Stands

MRP's stainless-steel snare drums are now available in a 13" diameter and in virtually any depth. The drums are said to have similar sound characteristics to those of MRP's 12" and 14" models, but with a higher tuning range. The drum shown features a polished chrome finish with black chrome hardware and offset lugs, and is priced at $850.

MRP's hardware line now features a single-tom stand. The design is intended to allow drummers the flexibility to mount one of their tom-toms closer to themselves for a tighter, flatter setup. List price is $149.

(516) 568-2820, www.mrpdrums.com.

The Reference Shelf

The Everything Drums Book

by Eric Starr **(Adams Media)**

This book offers a straightforward, step-by-step introduction to playing drums. Lessons cover tuning, timing, and hand technique, along with an examination of various musical styles including rock, blues, jazz, R&B, Latin, and Caribbean. Practice exercises help develop reading and playing skills, while audio examples on CD help train the ear. List price is $19.95.

www.adamsmedia.com.

Get Locked **(Alfred Publishing)**

There are plenty of books available for drummers and bassists separately. But few cater to the needs of both players as a unit. *Get Locked* is a progressive, step-by-step guide designed to fill that void. It's created specifically with intermediate through advanced players in mind, covering everything from basic time signatures and part construction to creating sonic textures and building a groove.

(818) 891-5999, www.alfred.com.

The Working Timpanist's Survival Guide

by John Tafoya **(Carl Fischer)**

The principal timpanist of the National Symphony Orchestra offers twenty-two of the most frequently requested timpani audition excerpts, along with useful performance tips for the student and professional timpanist. An included CD-ROM contains the timpani parts, and the book includes commentary on the excerpts, instructional photos, and extended examples. List price is $26.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com.

Mallet Duets: The Competition Collection

by Thomas Brown **(Carl Fischer)**

This book/CD collection contains fifteen original mallet duets that range from the elementary to the intermediate level. The performance CD allows students to hear the duets, and also offers play-along tracks for each part. The book is intended to help students develop ensemble skills and perfect their dynamic balance with other performers. List price is $14.95.

(212) 777-0900, www.carlfischer.com.

Afro-Cuban Rhythms Vols. 1 And 2

by Tevor Salloum **(Mel Bay)**

These two pocket-sized books come from Mel Bay's *Gig Saver* series. They offer quick, clear explanations and printed musical examples of eighteen different Afro-Cuban rhythms. Designed as instructional material for intermediate to advanced student percussionists performing in ensembles, the books could also serve as a resource for drumkit players seeking rhythmic ideas. List price for each volume is $3.95.

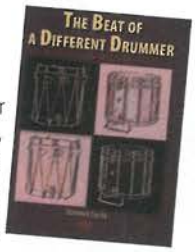
(800) 863-5229, www.melbay.com.

The Beat Of A Different Drummer

by Dominick Cuccia **(Meredith Music)**

Sub-titled "Not-So-Traditional Rudimental Solos For The Advanced Drummer," this book offers original, jazz-influenced rudimental solos for snare drum. The collection includes a three-page rudimental interpretation chart. The solos are intended to be fun and challenging even to the finest drummers. List price is $12.94.

(301) 261-5015, www.meredithmusic.com.



The Complete Sonor Guidebook 04/05 **(Sonor)**

This full-color book contains drums, percussion, Orff, education, concert, and marching instruments, as well as candid action shots of some of Sonor's top drum endorsers.

www.sonor.com, www.hohnerusa.com.

Hudson Music DVD And Book Reissues

Several of Hudson Music's top-selling videos have been expanded and released on DVD. They include *A Salute To Buddy Rich*, with Phil Collins, Dennis Chambers, and Steve Smith ($19.95); *Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez Live At The Modern Drummer Festival, 2000* ($24.95); and *Live In New York City*, by the Abercombie/Erskine/Mintzer/Patitucci Band (aka The Hudson Project) ($19.95).

Also reissued is *The Big Beat*, by Max Weinberg and Robert Santelli, which has been unavailable for ten years. The book features interviews with Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, D.J. Fontana, Levon Helm, Jim Keltner, Charlie Watts, Ringo Starr, Roger Hawkins, Bernard Purdie, Dino Danelli, Kenney Jones, Russ Kunkel, Dave Clark, and Johnny Bee. List price is $29.95.

www.hudsonmusic.com.

And What's More

ODERY DRUMS of Brazil now offers their custom-made kits in a new Acero waxed finish. The kit shown here features a special inlay, wooden hoops, and brushed-steel hardware.

Also available from Odery is their Air Control snare (which features adjustable air vents) with special national flag and color finishes. The flag of any country can be featured. The snare pictured below displays the Brazilian flag, and the drum is finished in anodized green.

(011) 19-3277-0299, www.odery.com.br.

SLUG PERCUSSION PRODUCTS has introduced a new Blue Baron blue cross graphic on its tom-tom model Batter Badge. The BB-675-BB is a six-armed badge specifically designed for drums over 10" in diameter. Made of .010" clear polycarbonate film with high-strength adhesive, this badge is designed to bond permanently to any new-condition drumhead. The badge creates a diaphragm on the drumhead that's said to increase sound projection, strike articulation, and drumhead durability. Suggested retail price is $9.95.

www.slugdrums.com.

Two new color offerings are available in **PACIFIC**'s mid-priced MX series. In addition to Deep Red and Sea Blue, kits and add-ons are now available in new Baja Gold and Deep Purple. The series boasts hand-applied matte finishes said to provide a stunning natural wood-grain look.

Kits feature 8-ply all-maple shells, matching wood bass drum hoops, Clear-Coated heads, swivel tom mounts, die-cast claw hooks, Pro-Cut bearing edges, telescoping bass drum spurs, and STM suspension tom mounts. Standard setups include 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 F.A.S.T. toms, an 18x22 kick, and a matching 5x14 snare, at a list price of $1,581 including Pacific's 8.1 hardware pack. Add-on toms in 8" and 16" sizes are available.

(805) 485-6999, www.pacificdrums.com.

VATER's new Vintage Bomber bass drum beater was designed in collaboration with Otis Brown III, drummer for jazz great Joe Lovano. It's intended to replicate the soft but boomy bass drum tones of the great jazz era. The beater's cork center is wrapped with a soft, puffy synthetic covering that's reminiscent in look, feel, and sound to the original lamb's-wool beaters from decades ago. List price is $28.50.

(781) 767-1877, www.vater.com.

YAMAHA's Band & Orchestral Division has introduced tubular aluminum models to their Field-Corps series of marching-percussion carriers. The Field-Corps Tubular carriers (by May) replace the existing aluminum T-bar carriers. They're said to be just as strong, but offer infinite adjustability while simultaneously reducing weight.

The new carriers feature infinite torso height and toe-in adjustment, as well as infinite shoulder rotation and camber adjustments. An adjustable back bar is a standard feature on the tom carriers and an option on the snare and bass drum carriers. The carriers are designed to fit all Yamaha marching percussion products, and range in price from $250 to $356.

(714) 522-9011, www.yamaha.com/band.

EVANS has combined three of its most popular accessories into one Tune-Up Kit. The kit contains one magnetic-head drumkey (which features a knurled knob, an ergonomic handle, and a magnetized head), plus an adapter that lets drummers carry the drumkey on a keychain or belt loop. Rounding out the kit are six Min-EMAD tom and snare dampers, which eliminate troublesome overtones and control sustain. Two of each size Min-EMAD (small, medium, large) are included. List price is $32.99.

(631) 439-3300, www.evansdrumheads.com.

MEINL states that their Classics cymbals "are unparalleled in the semi-professional range with regard to their extensive model selection." The company has made that selection easier and more affordable with two pre-packaged cymbal setups. The C-14/16/20M ($559) is a harmonically matched medium-weight cymbal set that includes 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and a 20" ride. The C-10/18 pitch-matched effects set ($249) contains a 10" splash and an 18" China cymbal.

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rating scale poor classic

RECORDINGS

The Many Faces Of Vinnie

Jing Chi 3D (Tone Center)

Three tracks stand out on the latest CD from blues-funk-fusion trio Jing Chi: **Jimmy Haslip**, **Robben Ford**, and **VINNIE COLAIUTA** offer time-tumbling insouciance and soloing ferocity over a programmed ostinato in "Chi Town." Colaiuta's "Hidden Treasure" is a full-bore exploration of the master drummer's interests, rolling through Karizma-like grooves, Porcaro-ish shuffles, a Latinized drum 'n' bass middle, and consummate metric modulation, all assisted by his Logic/Reason programming skills. And closer "Tangled Up" imagines The Allman Brothers playing Allan Holdsworth arrangements, a blistering party of fills and surging blues licks. The most well-balanced Jing Chi release yet.

Ken Micallef

Megadeth The System Has Failed (Sanctuary)

Ably backing artists as diverse as Mike Stern and Faith Hill, **VINNIE COLAIUTA** clearly compartmentalizes, which partially explains why he's hired so damn much. Now here he is on Megadeth's latest. Vinnie doesn't pull any tricks, as if he's eager to prove he can pummel authentically without promoting his drumming-superhero persona. That would be perfectly fine if the songs were interesting, but such standard metal/hard rock riffs—including spotty attempts at melodiousness—need more vibrancy behind them to make an impact. Vinnie could certainly get more gigs playing double pedal, but let's hope future employers request more of that Colaiuta creativity.

Michael Parillo

Komeda Kokomemedada (Universal)

Despite the exit of guitarist Mattias Nordlander, plus a six-year gap since their last album, Komeda's new long-player doesn't betray extreme changes in their sound. A stately yet propulsive Swedish pop collective, Komeda remains defined by Krautrock-informed rhythmic precision, **Lena Karlsson**'s seductively unhysterical vocals, and a deep bag of hooks and melodies from which they build their endlessly appealing tunes. Multi-instrumentalist **JONAS HOLMBERG** chooses to (cleverly) program at times, but don't be too quick to judge when that's the case. He's likely to pull out a tasty fill two minutes in, and make you rewind to discover his Swiss-watch rhythms.

Adam Budofsky

Umphrey's McGee Anchor Drops (Hanging Brains Music/SCI Fidelity)

Umphrey's McGee does a lot with a lot. Metallic crunch, prog-rock complexity, pop songcraft, and jam-scene expansiveness come together in an impressively coherent manner on this Midwest sextet's latest LP, their first with drummer **KRIS MYERS**. Myers is equally comfortable working the snare-bass-hats pocket, blasting double-bass runs, and locking into tricky unison figures. And he'd *better* be, since Umphrey's rapidly shifting ideas require a well-balanced timekeeper. The drummer also fosters a tight rapport with percussionist **ANDY FARAG**, who often bides his time in the background but occasionally leaps to the forefront with artful embellishment.

Michael Parillo

Ryan Inselman Perfectly Human (Angel Beach)

RYAN INSELMAN's debut, a synthesis of percussion pop that draws on jazz, Afro-Cuban, hip-hop, and Brazilian, while managing to express new concepts, also draws the listener closer with each track. The old warning "Push the envelope and you'll lose 'em" has no value here. Minnesota-based Inselman speaks a dozen languages at once and actually has something to say. Pure-cussion of a high order, recorded and presented with style.

Bill Kiely

Motörhead

Inferno (Metal-Is/Sanctuary)

It's been more than a quarter century since this trio's debut album, but Motörhead have maintained their metallic punk rock style with the utmost of care, as *Inferno* finds the act performing with the same vitality and enthusiasm as they did on their earliest efforts. The no-nonsense efforts of **MIKKEY DEE** are well documented on *Inferno*'s dozen tracks, particularly in the sprightly double-kicked intro of "In The Name Of Tragedy" and bombastic tom patterns of "In The Black." There isn't an immense variety of material presented here. Instead, it's Dee's unmatched consistency and approach that fuels the flames of this *Inferno*.

Waleed Rashidi

Radian

Juxtaposition (Thrill Jockey)

Juxtaposition indeed. Vienna's Radian are masterful at mixing the acoustic with the heavily electronicized, and drummer **MARTIN BRANDLMAYR** is particularly artful within this context. Absolutely accessible, but packed with enough subtle shadings to warrant many future listens, *Juxtaposition* is that rare computer-assisted album with soul. The drum tones, in fact, are often quite traditional. But when woven among the spacey sonics, Brandlmayr's stark rhythms sound downright futuristic. Bassist **John Norman**, keyboardist **Stefan Nemeth**, and engineer **John McEntire** (Tortoise) deserve their share of praise, too. Fans of *sound*—and of musical restraint—gather 'round.

Adam Budofsky

Breaking Benjamin

We Are Not Alone (Hollywood)

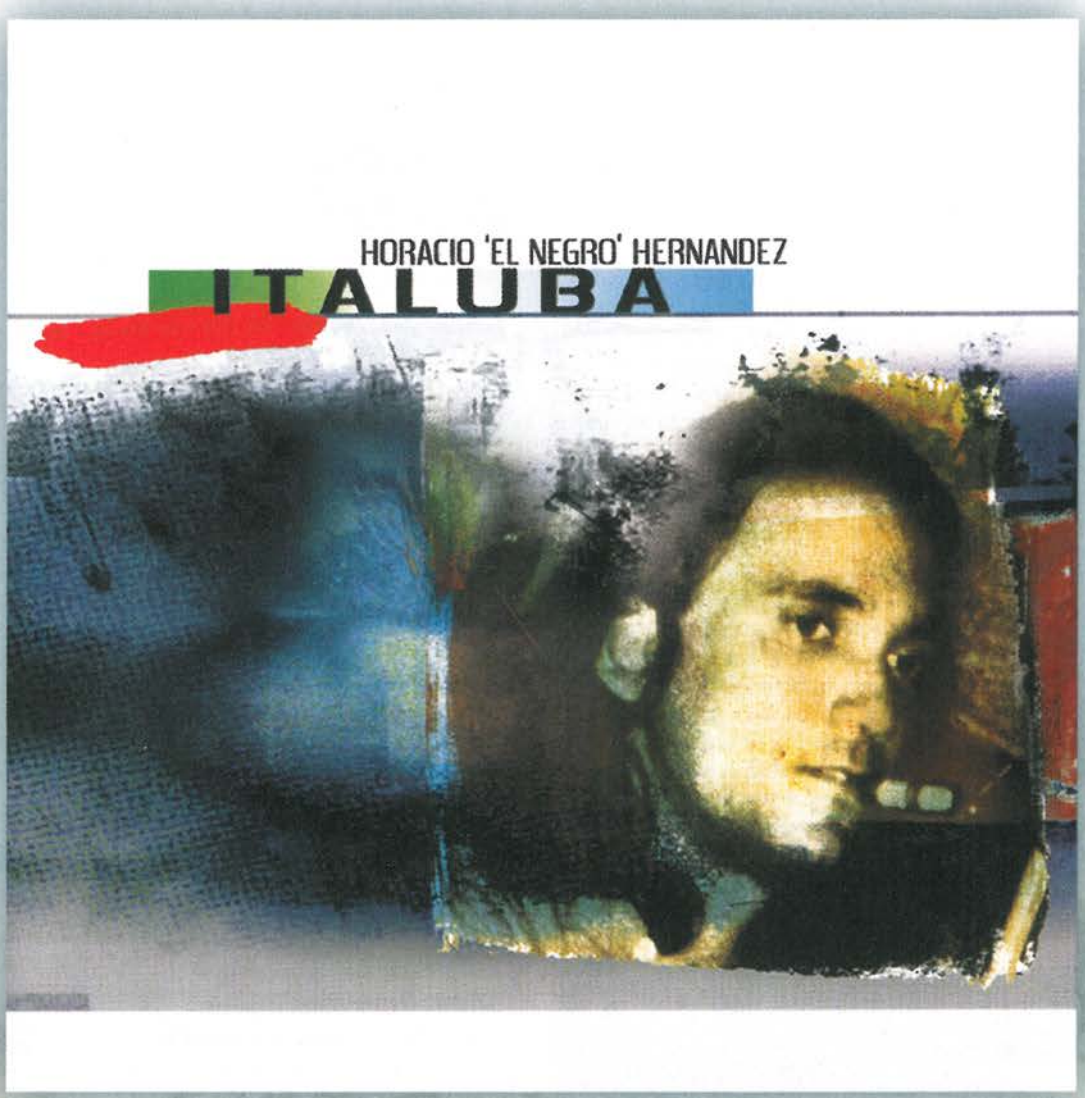
Filled with vocal hooks and crunchy guitar lines, Breaking Benjamin's new one delivers one solid, heavy, modern rock performance after another. The band's dark-hued songs tend to revolve around light texture and heavy groove, augmented by soaring vocal melodies. Throughout the album, **JEREMY HUMMEL**'s drumming authoritatively supports the songs, aiding the transitions between sections. The opening track, "So Cold," immediately captures the ear, setting up the rest of the album, which, while lacking a little in variety, is a strong record overall.

Martin Patmos

ITALUBA

The Scorching Solo Debut From

HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ



Widely recognized as one of the most innovative and dynamic drummers on the international music scene, El Negro has fired the rhythm sections of Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Paquito D'Rivera, Carlos Santana, Roy Hargrove, and Michel Camilo

ITALUBA, Hernandez' debut release on Pimienta Records, features the two-time Grammy winner's own incendiary quartet performing explosive composi- tions that embody all of the creativity and passion that El Negro is famous for, in a fresh, ultra-contemporary setting. ITALUBA redefines Latin Jazz for the new millennium.

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Ozomatli Street Signs (Concord)

Fusing funk with Latin rhythms, and a jazz sensibility with hip-hop, Ozomatli's latest album is a grooving festival for the ears. The group's seamless mix of traditional and urban feels is one that few others can duplicate honestly. This album is *loaded* with catchy melodies over pulsating drums (**MARIO CALIRE**) and percussion (**JUSTIN "EL NIÑO" PORÉE, JIRO YAMAGUCHI**) that are always deep in the pocket. And while each song has a different emphasis, the band never loses its identity. If you haven't heard Ozomatli yet, check them out. Before long you'll be grabbing your sticks to play along.

Martin Patmos

Battles EP C (Monitor)

The brainiac bullying of Battles comes as no surprise when you realize that the group includes some of America's most proficient and forgotten progressive alternative musicians. Guitarist **Ian Williams** led Don Caballero; drummer **JOHN STANIER** was the mayhem-inducing stickler of intellectual metal moshers Helmet. *EP C* is fascinated with repetition and layers, Stanier's hard-hat drumming slapping wirey guitar and keyboard melodies like flies in a blender. Angular and frenetic, the music recalls everything from Gentle Giant to electronic guru Morton Subotnick. Throughout, Stanier is an Energizer Bunny of rhythmic efficiency, like an entire drum corps squeezed into an Akai sampler.

Ken Micallef

Helmet Size Matters (Interscope)

After a lengthy hiatus, alterna-metal act Helmet has returned to the fold with the powerful *Size Matters*. The revitalized lineup includes White Zombie's **JOHN TEMPESTA**, replacing former drummer John Stanier, who is now in Tomahawk and Battles. (See above). Decidedly more thunderous and forthright than previous Helmet releases, *Size Matters* sees Tempesta laying down some serious grooves, like the straight-quarters of "See You Dead" or the concise, accented ending of "Last Breath." The fill-happy "Crashing Foreign Cars" is the lone awkward cut, which finds an overly eager Tempesta liberally scurrying around the toms. But don't let that track dissuade you; this is a rock drummer who *does* matter.

Waleed Rashidi

Beat Box by Ed King

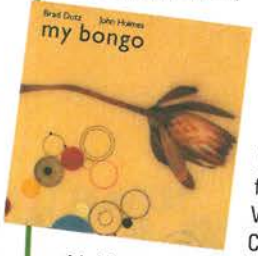
Tye Tribbett Life (Sony)

Finally somebody gets it! And it comes from the least expected place—Gospel music. Tye Tribbett's debut album, *Life*, is on target to become one of the most influential records of the year. Tribbett perfectly marries programmed and live drums, two things that have been warring since computers were introduced to music. The album's exec producer, James Poyser (whose résumé includes Jill Scott, The Roots, and many more), made sure the signature Philly sound of lazy snares and "dirty" drum sounds made its way to the album. "We used sounds like 808 kicks to add some thump and keep it ghetto," explains Poyser. Listening to songs like "No Way" and "Superstar," it's hard to tell where the kit ends and the program begins. Some credit must be given to Philly native and Lil' John Roberts protégé **GEORGE "SPANKY" MCCURDY**. This album clearly shows how things that have been separate for so long can co-exist and make beautiful music together.

Hands-On by David Licht

Joji Horota & Pete Lockett, Brad Dutz & John Holmes

Taiko To Tabla features **JOJI HOROTA** and **PETE LOCKETT**, master percussionists who here bring their two worlds together. Deep tabla grooves, hi-hop frame drum prayer, ethereal to cave-stomping taiko drums, all bathed in sub-sonic keyboard pads. Some amazing moments! (Arcmusic.com)



Exquisite compositions and musical landscapes typify *My Bongo* by **BRAD DUTZ** and **JOHN HOLMES**. The sounds within are nicely symbolized by the cover art by Jeff Kaiser: black & white and colored gears and wheels below a large flower over a "krackle" field. Yellow discs fly at you from another flower on the back cover. With titles like "B-17 Apricot Seeds," "Pig On Cow," "Tribute To Elvin" (more appropriate now with his passing), and "We Still Like Gongs," *My Bongo* will keep you on your aural toes. (www.pfmentum.com)

Jon Cleary And The Absolute Monster Gentlemen

Pin Your Spin (Basin Street)

Each track by this veteran New Orleans funk band is a case study in tunesmanship, led by the strong, musical drumming of **RAYMOND WEBER**. Monsters these players are, but would gentlemen play such nasty grooves? Weber breaks each groove down to the core and lays it right in the pocket. Multi-instrumentalist/vocalist Cleary has a white soul sound reminiscent of Bobby Caldwell and Boz Scaggs. If the vocals get sappy or cliché, you can find solace in the groove, especially on the instrumental powder keg "Ain't Nuttin' Nice." **JAMAL BATISTE** pounds the traps on "Zulu Strut," and **DANIEL SADOWNICK** adds percussion throughout.

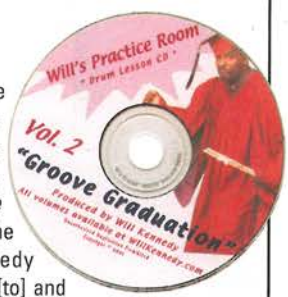
Robin Tolleson

Multi-Media

Will Kennedy

Will's Practice Room, Vol. 2: Groove Graduation (independent)

level: all, $24.95 (includes drum lesson CD)



Since leaving contempo-jazzers The Yellowjackets a few years ago, Will Kennedy has continued to educate by reaching out to other drummers. This twelve-page pamphlet, the second installment in Kennedy's *Practice Room* series, aims to improve drummers' "in the pocket" feel and timekeeping ability. Kennedy unabashedly encourages drummers to "listen [to] and steal" snippets of the funk grooves he recorded for this project in order to improve their own playing.

Kennedy covers a lot of ground quickly here (maybe a bit *too* quickly—one of the project's few flaws) by using a three-tiered groove checklist. This list includes knowing what grooves to play, raising the level of musicality within those grooves, making sure the grooves you play are "phat," and ghost note placement. Perhaps what's most impressive about this effort is that Kennedy offers educational materials through his Web site, which has the makings of a grassroots, cyber-drummer community. A laid-back phone interview with special guest **CARTER BEAUFORD** (Dave Matthews Band) regarding time and locking into what the bass player is throwing down (among other concepts) sounds like two old friends shooting the breeze. A nice touch. (www.willkennedy.com)

Will Romano

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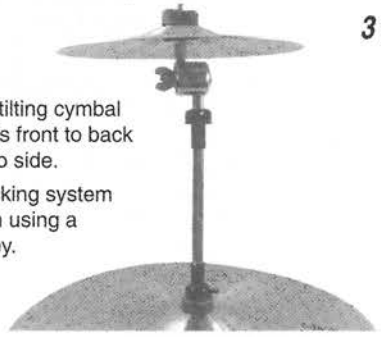

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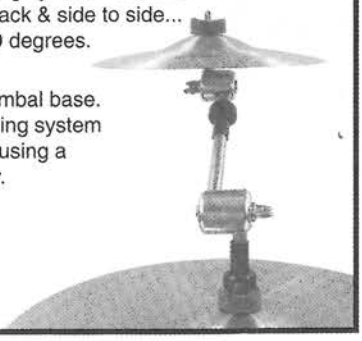

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DVDs

Giovanni Hidalgo and Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez

Traveling Through Time (Warner Bros.)

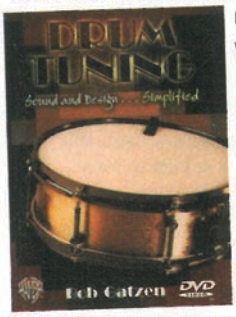
level: advanced, $39.95

Simply put, this is the most astounding Latin percussion performance I have ever seen, from two of the world's leading Latin percussion masters. Hidalgo and Hernandez perform over two hours of polyrhythmic, over-the-top Latin percussion duets that take Latin drumset and percussion concepts far beyond anything currently available on video. Gio and Negro analyze and discuss their concepts for these duets, breaking down each section and explaining the styles of Latin music the ideas are derived from, all the while in a humble and educational format. With excellent production, lots of bonus features, and visually revealing camera angles, this is a Latin percussion lover's dream come true. **Mike Haid**

Drum Tuning: Sound And Design...Simplified

by Bob Gatzen (Warner Bros.)

level: intermediate to advanced, $29.95



Gatzen is the guru of drum tuning. His extensive work with numerous drum manufacturers has resulted in some of the drumming industry's most innovative products. This 160-minute DVD package includes Gatzen's enlightening 1994 video *Drum Tuning: Sound And Design* along with his more recent concepts on tuning based on easy-to-follow yet involved methods of touch, eye, and sound techniques. Top-quality production, in-depth information, and countless visual examples make this the undisputed source for drum tuning available on the DVD market. **Mike Haid**

Danny Gottlieb's Jazz And Rock Drummer's Workshop:

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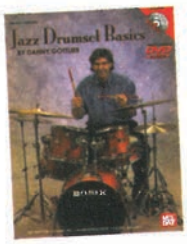
level: beginner to advanced, $9.95 each



Our host flaunts his considerable knowledge on these six DVDs, calling on his own studies with Joe Morello, Gary Chester, and Mel Lewis, and channeling a stream of practical stick tips with musical anecdotes from a rich career (Mahavishnu Orchestra, Blues Brothers, many more). Young rock drummers shouldn't be scared off by his joke about wearing a "cool shirt." Gottlieb may not have any noticeable piercings, but he *does* have chops. He moves from talk about holding the sticks, making a stroke, and simple dynamics in *Rock Drumset Basics*, to inventing more complex rhythms out of quarter, 8th, and 16th-note feels in *Advanced Rock Drumset*. *Jazz Drumset Basics* starts with counting exercises and some simple beats, and *Advanced Jazz Drumset* moves to concepts of subdividing the rhythms and playing more complex phrasings in samba, baiao, Latin 3/2 clave, and "loose jazz." Good, useful information in affordable, well-paced packages. **Robin Tolleson**

BOOKS

Vocal Percussion 2: Latin

by Richard Filz (Universal Edition)

level: beginner to intermediate, $23.95 (with CD)

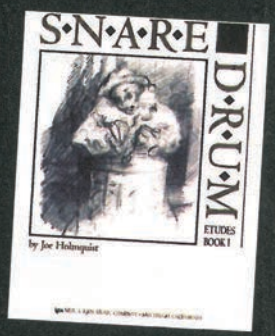
Your body can be a percussive wonderland, or so this book proposes. The idea goes like this: By using your voice and body, you'll be able to produce Latin rhythm patterns such as samba, bossa nova, cha cha, and mambo, internalizing them in the process. Soon you'll be vocalizing the syllables "shi ki ti ki" to represent shaker, "krrrrrr" for vibra slap; "oo gee oo gee" for cuica, and "doo pa" for congas.

The physical aspects of these examples and exercises range from "mouth drumming," a technique most of us have likely employed, to clapping clave pattern while walking in place in quarter-note time. On the whole this book (and others in this series) offers the means for drummers to easily ingest common world rhythms. And while this method won't always lead you by the hand, it does one better: It grabs you by the throat. (www.universaledition.com) **Will Romano**

Snare Drum Etudes, Books I, II, and III

by Joe Holmquist (Neil A. Kjos Music Company)

level: all, $6.95 (Book I, Book II), $7.95 (Book III)



These three books of etudes by Joe Holmquist, a freelance performer/educator in Nebraska who received his master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, progress from simple two-line pieces for beginners to difficult two-page etudes for advanced snare drummers. One of the best features of all three books is that each and every etude includes dynamics and tempos, a *must* for contemporary musicians.

Book I contains 92 solo studies at beginning to intermediate levels. Rhythms range from 8th notes to 16th-note triplets, and they include mostly five- and nine-stroke rolls (which the author recommends practicing both as "double stroke" and "multiple bounce"), plus flams and drags. Included are a few "blank" etudes to encourage students to try their hand at composing.

Book II comprises 45 more etudes for intermediate to lower-advanced levels, and continues the use of different meters, from 4/4 to 6/8. Most of the solos in this book are one page, though the last ten are two pages each, including one duet. Book III adds another 39 technically and musically challenging pieces for the advanced drummer.

Holmquist's books are both student-friendly and extremely musical, a welcome addition to any teacher's repertoire of snare drum books. Whether for sightreading practice or weekly lessons, these etudes will benefit any snare drummer. Drumset players may wish to check out his companion series, *Drum Set Etudes*, Books I-III. **Lauren Vogel Weiss**

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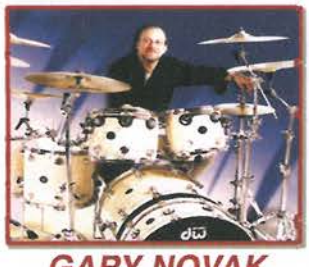

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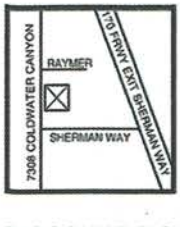

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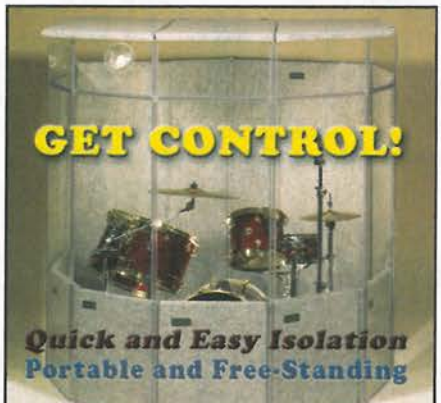

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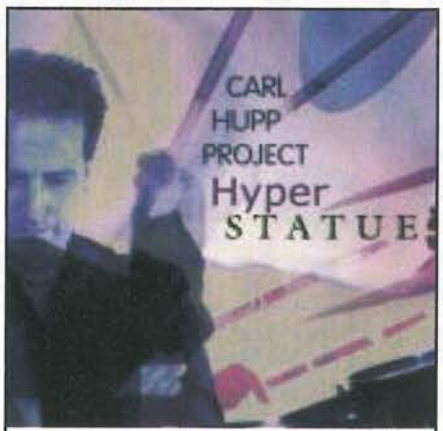

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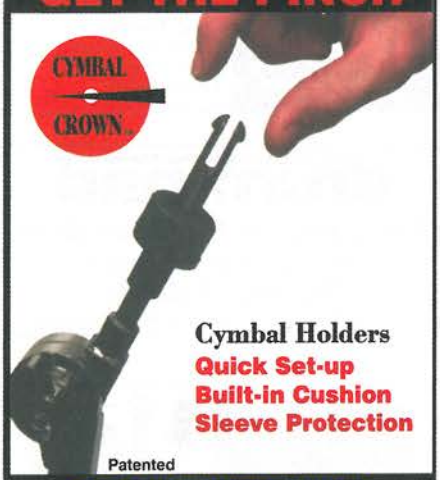

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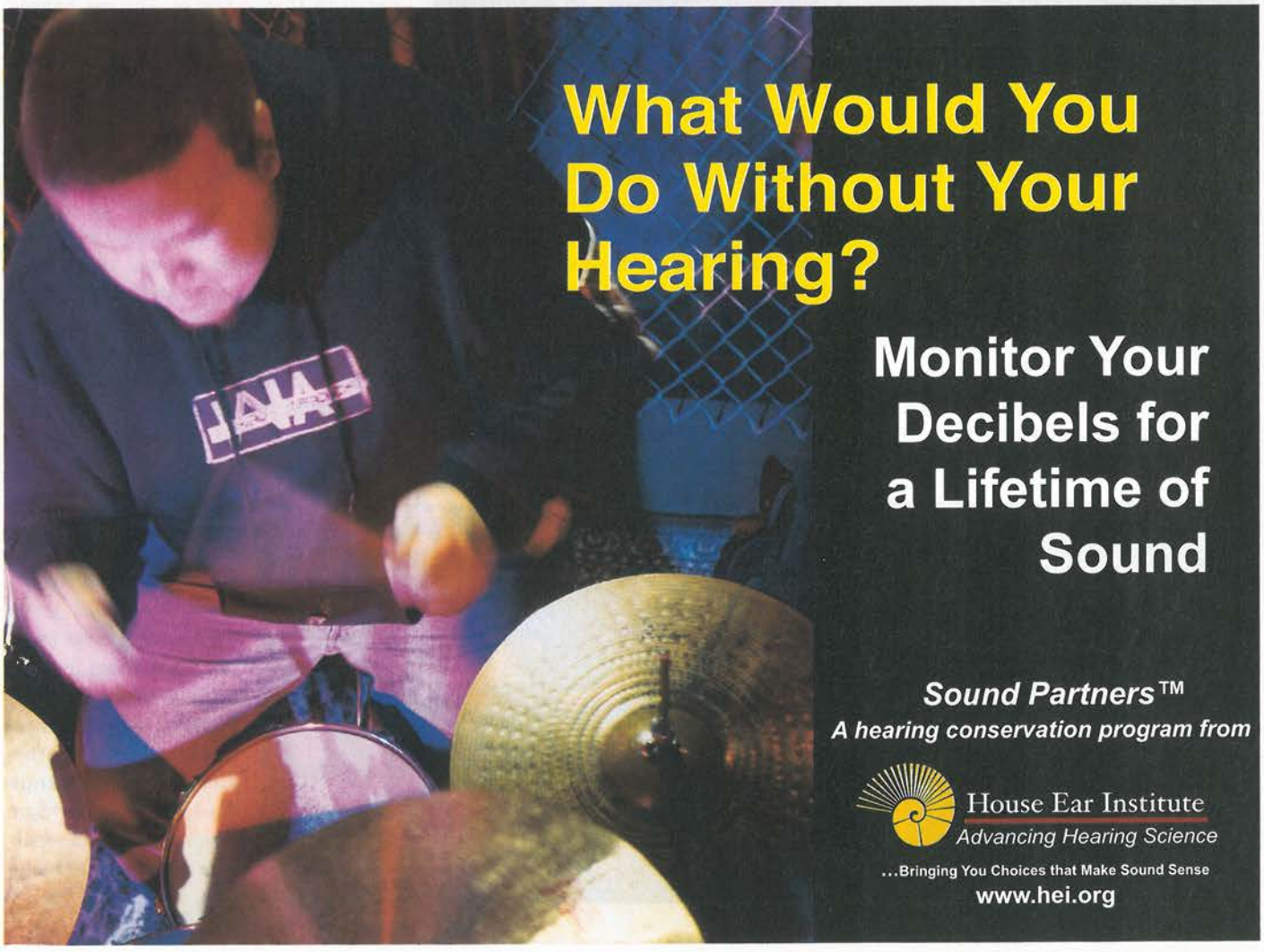
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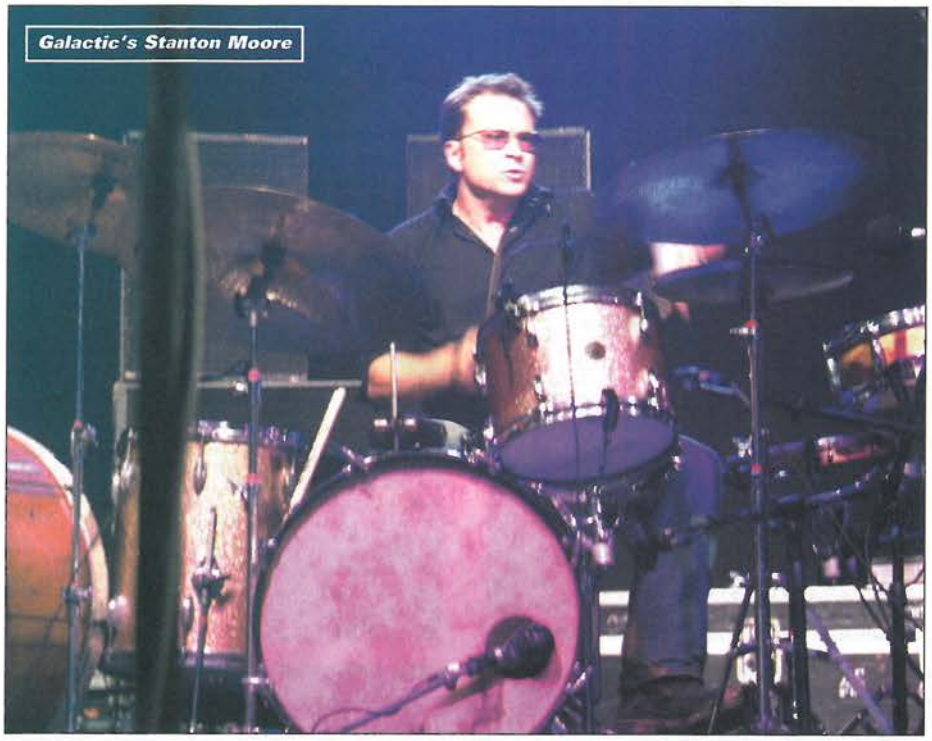
2004 Bonnaroo Music Festival


Galactic's Stanton Moore

Torrential downpours couldn't dampen the spirits of the 90,000 fans at the 2004 Bonnaroo Music Festival in Manchester, Tennessee, held this past June 11–13. Bonnaroo has established itself as one of America's premier music festivals by emphasizing a diverse lineup of acts, along with a fan-friendly approach. This year's show offered everything from Japanese punk-rock superheroes Peelander-Z to eighty-one-year-old bluegrass legend Doc Watson—and featured scores of world-class drummers.

Although the music was scheduled to begin on June 11, the first notes were actually played the previous night, when The Dirty Dozen Brass Band set up for an impromptu set in the VIP tent. Led by the funky second-line rhythms of drummer **Terence Higgins**, the band created an instant party that soon spilled out into the festival grounds, with hundreds parading behind.

When the "official" show started, the swampy conditions proved perfect for Galactic's New Orleans bayou-boogie. A smile crept across **Stanton Moore's** face as he banged out the opening for "Baker's Dozen" on his vintage Gretsch kit. Throngs of rain-soaked Galactic fans grinned along, letting their jaws drop when Stanton executed some precise one-handed rolls.

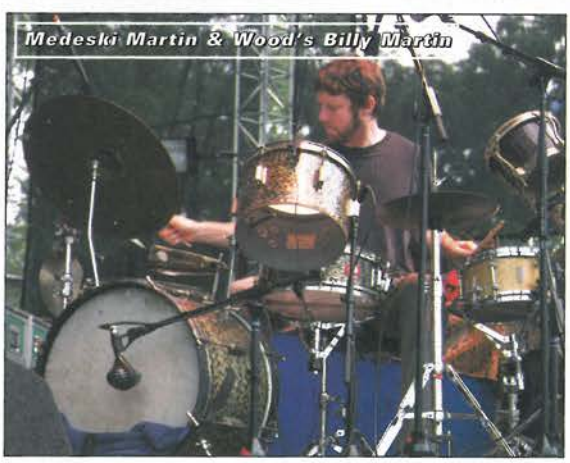
The whole weekend was an aural carnival, with music coming from as many as seven stages simultaneously. Of course, this created some serious scheduling conflicts for those hoping to hear all of their favorite drummers. On Sunday afternoon, fans had to choose between catching **Billy Martin** with Medeski Martin & Wood, **Brain Mantia** with Material, **Kenny Wollesen** and **Mauro Refosco** with David Byrne, and **Stanton Moore** (once again) with the Bonnaroo Superjam.

Those who opted for a second serving of Stanton were rewarded with an all-star funk throw-down that included members of Soulive, George Porter Jr. of the Meters, and even Maceo Parker. The set peaked with a drum duet between Stanton and **Adam Deitch** of John Scofield's band. The two friends played musical chairs with the drum stool, sharing Moore's super-sized set to rousing applause.

Another festival highlight was the performance of indie-rock darlings Wilco. Featuring music off the critically acclaimed *Yankee Foxtrot Hotel* and their new album, *A Ghost Is Born*, Wilco mixed the understated beauty of singer Jeff Tweedy's alt-country songs with a wild spirit of experimentation. Drummer **Glen Kotche** perfectly navigated between Wilco's extremes with imagination and a tuneful ear.

Another drummer who dealt with musical opposites was Yo La Tengo's **Georgia Hubley**. She provided subtle brushwork on the New Jersey trio's gentle love songs, and ferocious backbeats for husband and bandmate Ira Kaplan's vicious guitar freakouts. This impressive dynamic range made Hubley a focal point in one of the weekend's most compelling sets.

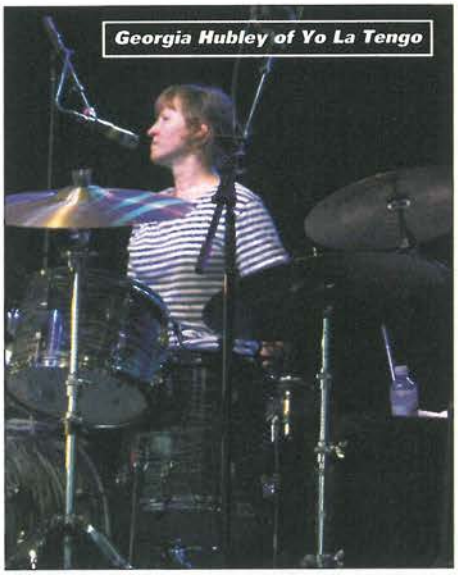
Dave King of The Bad Plus


Medeski Martin & Wood's Billy Martin

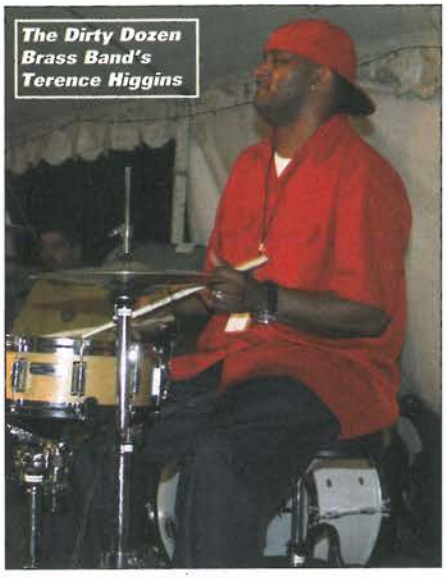
Midwestern jazz trio The Bad Plus defended their title as the "loudest piano trio ever," thanks in no small part to drummer **Dave King**. He combined lightning-quick chops with a heavy-handedness that is the key to the group's muscular jazz. King's energy is infectious, and his solos are awe-inspiring.

Kentucky's My Morning Jacket delivered one of the best sets of the festival, aided by the natural drama of an approaching thunderstorm. The blustering wind and looming black clouds provided the perfect backdrop for the quintet's larger-than-life, reverbed-out southern rock. Drummer **Patrick Hallahan**'s sticks pounded his drums even harder than did the rain that pelted the crowd when the sky opened up. It was a powerhouse performance and a defining moment of Bonnaroo 2004.

Other drummers of note included **Claude Coleman** of Ween, **Tim "Herb" Alexander** of Primus, **Mickey Hart** and **Bill Kreutzmann** of The Dead, **Matt Abts** of


Georgia Hubley of Yo La Tengo

Gov't Mule, **Jon Fishman** of The Jazz Mandolin Project, **Vinnie Amico** and **Jim Loughlin** of moe., **Russell Batiste** of Vida Blue, **Brady Blade** of Dave Matthews & Friends, **Cody Dickinson** of The North Mississippi All-Stars, **Russ Lawton** and


The Dirty Dozen Brass Band's Terence Higgins

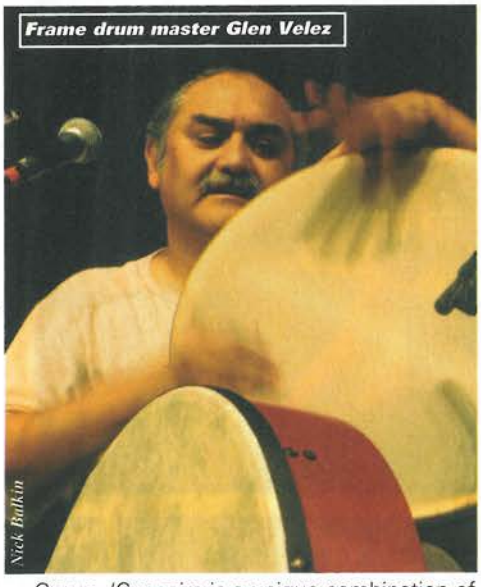
Cyro Baptista of The Trey Anastasio Band, **Brian Rosenthal** of Guster, and **Alan Evans** of Soulive.

Story by Mike Lang
Photos by Joseph Moore

Berklee World Percussion Festival

Berklee College of Music presented its tenth annual World Percussion Festival this past June 14–18, on the school's Boston campus. The event is an intensive summer course for percussionists taught by Berklee's faculty and special guest instructors from around the world. This year's festival showcased a wide variety of styles, including Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, West African, South Indian, Irish, jazz, funk, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, and fusion for hand percussionists and drumset players.

The festival began Monday, June 14, with auditions in the morning, master classes throughout the day, and a special evening concert featuring renowned frame drummer **Glen Velez** and his ensemble, Handance. On Tuesday evening, faculty drummer **Bertram Lehmann**—who has played with artists like Paquito D'Rivera, Danilo Perez, and Claudio Roditi—performed with Boston's Brazilian Capoeira


Frame drum master Glen Velez
Nick Balkin

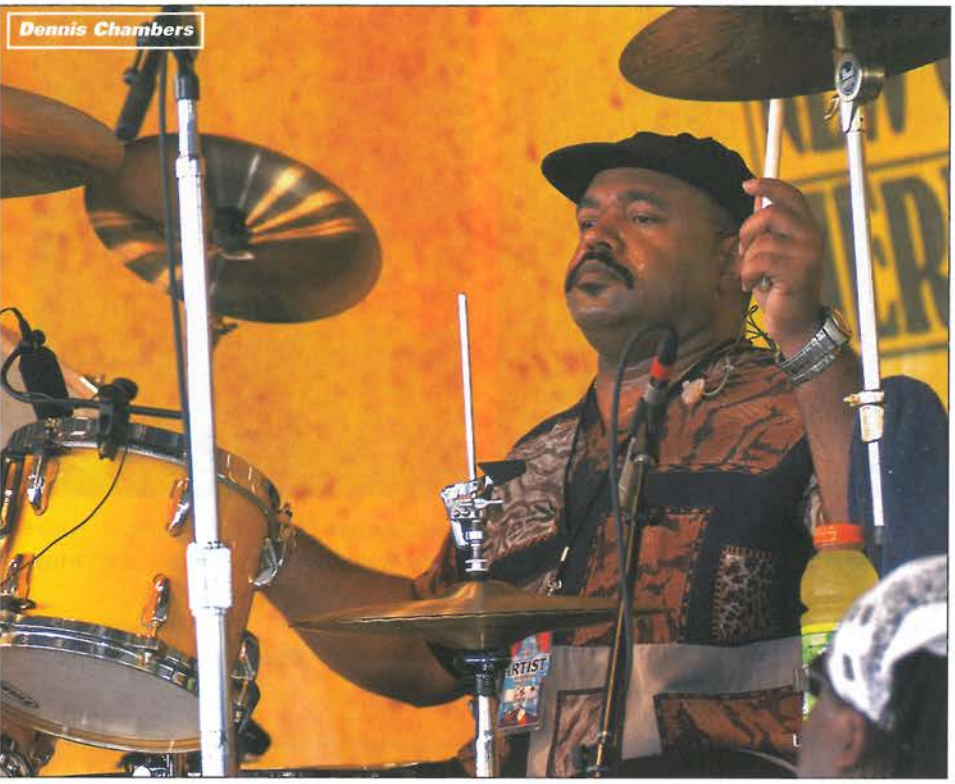
Group. (Capoeira is a unique combination of martial arts and dance.)

On Wednesday, faculty vibist **Victor Mendoza** presented Latin Night, which featured drum star **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez** and conga great **Giovanni Hidalgo**. Thursday's concert featured South Indian percussion specialist, scholar, and composer **Trichy Sankaran**. The show also presented Celtic drummer and bodhran virtuoso **Mance Grady**.

The last day of the festival featured ensemble faculty concerts, as well as a public drum circle held in Boston's Back Bay. That evening, Berklee presented its Faculty Blowout Concert, which included percussion department chairman **Dean Anderson**, assistant chairman **Yoron Israel**, and faculty members **Angelamia Bachemin**, **Eguie Castrillo**, and **Kenwood Dennard**, among many others. Other highlights from the week included a rhythm class with Trichy Sankaran, a contemporary percussion setups clinic with **Ricardo Monzon**, a Taiko drumming workshop, a hip-hop ensemble workshop, and a student jam session directed by many of the festival faculty.

New Orleans JazzFest '04

The thirty-fifth annual New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, held this past April 23–May 2, featured such world-renowned drummers as **Dennis Chambers** (Santana), **Ricky Fataar** (Bonnie Raitt), **Walfredo Reyes Jr.** (Steve Winwood), **Marcus Baylor** (Christian McBride), and **Jeff "Tain" Watts** (Branford Marsalis).


Dennis Chambers

Johnny Vidacovich

Many great local drummers were in evidence and in great form, playing everything from straight-ahead jazz to funk and R&B, and from gospel to Cajun and zydeco. Drummers who performed this year included **Jason Marsalis** (with his father, Ellis), **Raymond Weber** (with Ivan Neville's Dumpsta Funk), **"Mean" Willie Green** (with Cyril Neville and with The Neville Brothers), **Shannon Powell** (with his own band and with John Boutte), **Ricky Sebastian** (with Los Hombres Calientes), **Johnny Vidacovich** (with Astral Project and with his own trio), **Zigaboo Modeliste** (leading his own Funk Review, and with Willie Tee), **Mac Carter** (with Jon Cleary & The Absolute Monster Gentlemen), **Jamal Batiste**, **Herman Ernest** (with Dr. John), **Bob French** (with his own band), **Omari Neville** (with his father, Cyril Neville), **Stanton Moore** (with Galactic), and **Terence Higgins** (with The Dirty Dozen). Stanton and Terence also performed in The Woodshed, billed as a "drum battle" between the two.

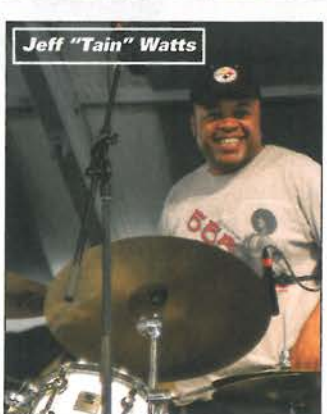
A special event this year involved an evening performance at the Saenger Theater, which was filmed for an upcoming Sony/Tristar feature release to be called *Southern Nights: Make It Funky*. The show featured a performance by the great **Earl Palmer**, who changed the course of American music in the late 1950s on records that he made in New Orleans with Little Richard and Fats Domino. Earl shared the stage with musical director—and great drummer—**Steve Jordan** for rousing versions of "Rip It Up" (with Johnny Lang) and "I'm Ready" (with Keith Richards).

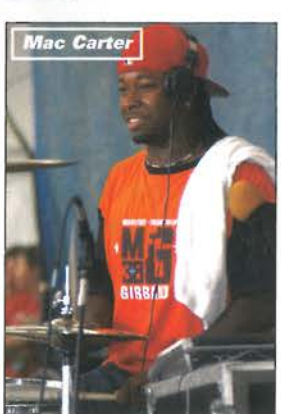
There is no better place in the world to hear spirit-lifting drumming than New Orleans, and no better time to hear it than during the annual Jazz & Heritage Festival. Go to www.nojazzfest.com for more information.

Story by Paul Siegel
Photos by Clayton Call

Willie Green

Shannon Powell


Jeff "Tain" Watts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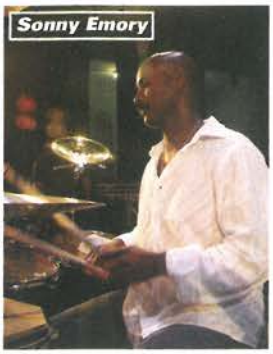
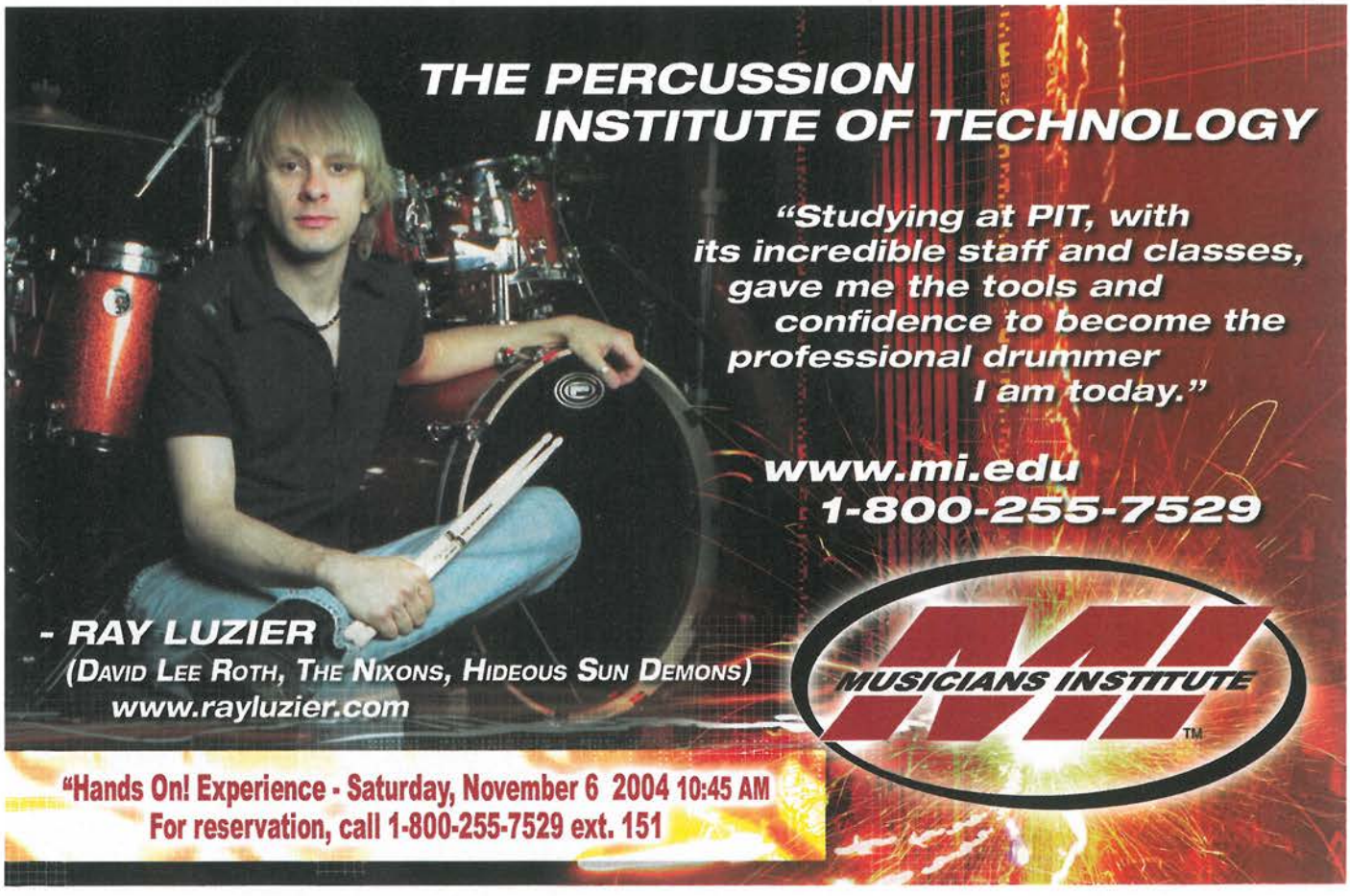


This past May 18, the original **Long Island Drum Center** brought what was billed as a "triple-threat" drum clinic/concert to the Performing Arts Center of Five Towns College in Dix Hills, New York. The show featured drumming powerhouses **Tommy Aldridge**, **Sonny Emory**, and **John "JR" Robinson**. The three drumming greats displayed their individual styles and signature techniques. Each dedicated his performance to Elvin Jones.

Emory (Earth, Wind & Fire, Steely Dan) performed on a Yamaha Oak Custom kit, while Aldridge (Whitesnake, Ozzy Osbourne) performed on a Maple Custom Nouveau. Robinson (Pointer Sisters, Steve Winwood, Madonna) performed on a Yamaha Birch Custom Nouveau kit in a concert setting. His all-star band included vocalist Tabitha Fair and bassist Will Lee. The event was sponsored by **Yamaha Drums**, **Zildjian Cymbals**, and Long Island Drum Center. For more information visit www.yamahadrums.com.

Montreal Drum Fest Lineup

The final lineup for the 12th annual **Montreal Drum Fest** has been established. Friday, November 12 will see a concert performance by **Manu Katché & Band.** Saturday, November 13 will include the **Yamaha Rising Star Showcase**, **Vito Rezza & Band**, **Sam Aliano**, **The Drumbassadors**, **Rayford Griffin**, and **Virgil Donati.** Sunday's show will feature **Tony Albino**, **Gustavo Meli**, **Dave Langguth**, **Thierry Arpino & Essouna**, **Ralph Irizarry & Timbalaye**, **Jimmy DeGrasso**, and **Billy Kilson & BK Groove**. Contact Ralph Angelillo at (450) 928-1726, www.montrealdrumfest.com.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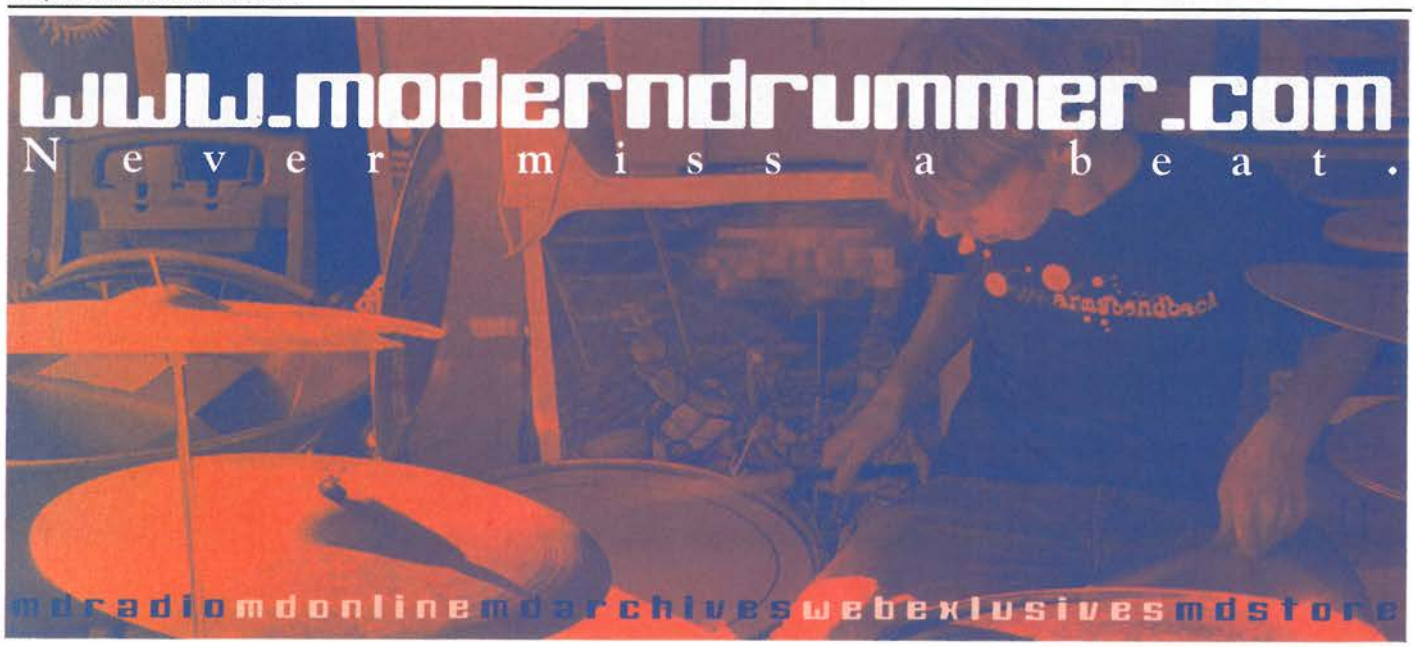

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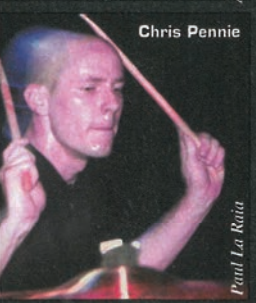

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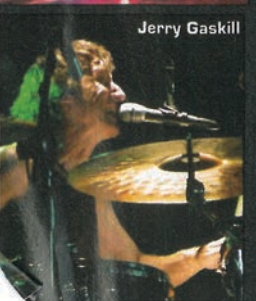

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The mini-kick is miked internally with an AKG D112 on the May mounting system. According to Mick, "The drum has loads of attack and punch, with a surprisingly good amount of low-end tone. When it's miked, it's brilliant for live and studio situations."

Mick's snare drum is a 5½x14 Fibes SFT fiberglass model, with real copper wrap. All the hardware is Pearl, except for a Gibraltar cymbal stacker. The cymbals are all Zildjians, including a 21" Sweet Ride and a 22" Swish Knocker.

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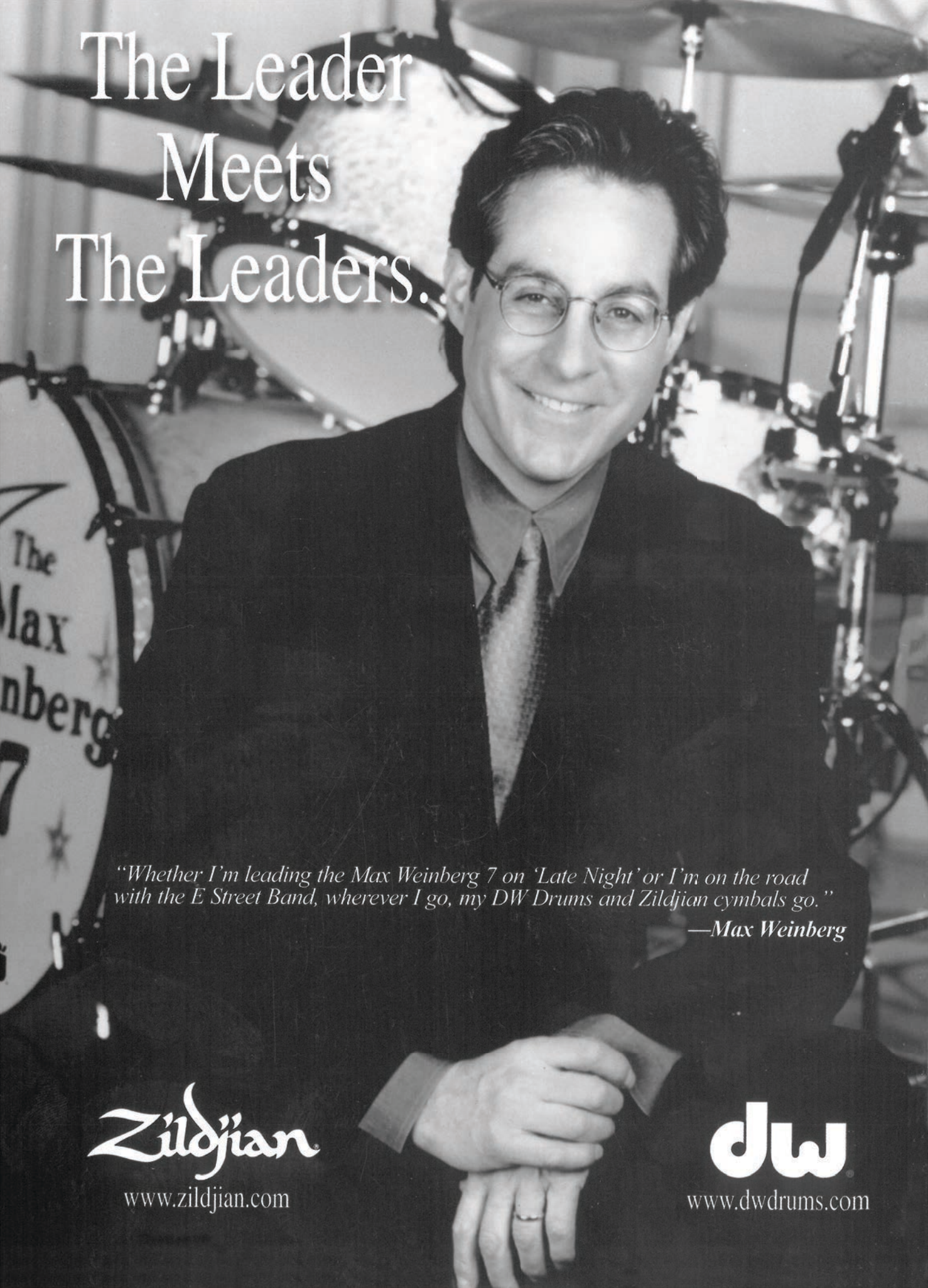
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